The Newspaper of the Interactive Entertainment Industry $3.95US

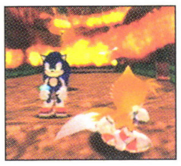
GameWEEK®

May 12, 1999 www.gameweek.com Volume 5, Issue 17

In This Issue

Retailers Coming to E^3 with High Expectations
Solid first quarter sales point to another good year
Page 26

Now Playing at E^3
If you're a buyer, these are the games that you should be looking at
Page 42



GameWEEK Exclusive Interview: E^3's Creator—Pat Ferrell
While the Industry knows about the show, few people know who created it and why
Page 56

Departments

Industry News 3
PR Insider 37
Financial News 38, 60
Reviews 50
Release Schedule 52
Company Profile 58
Game Jobs 62
Classifieds 70
Tracking Reports 72
Stock Report 74

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SPECIAL E^3 ISSUE

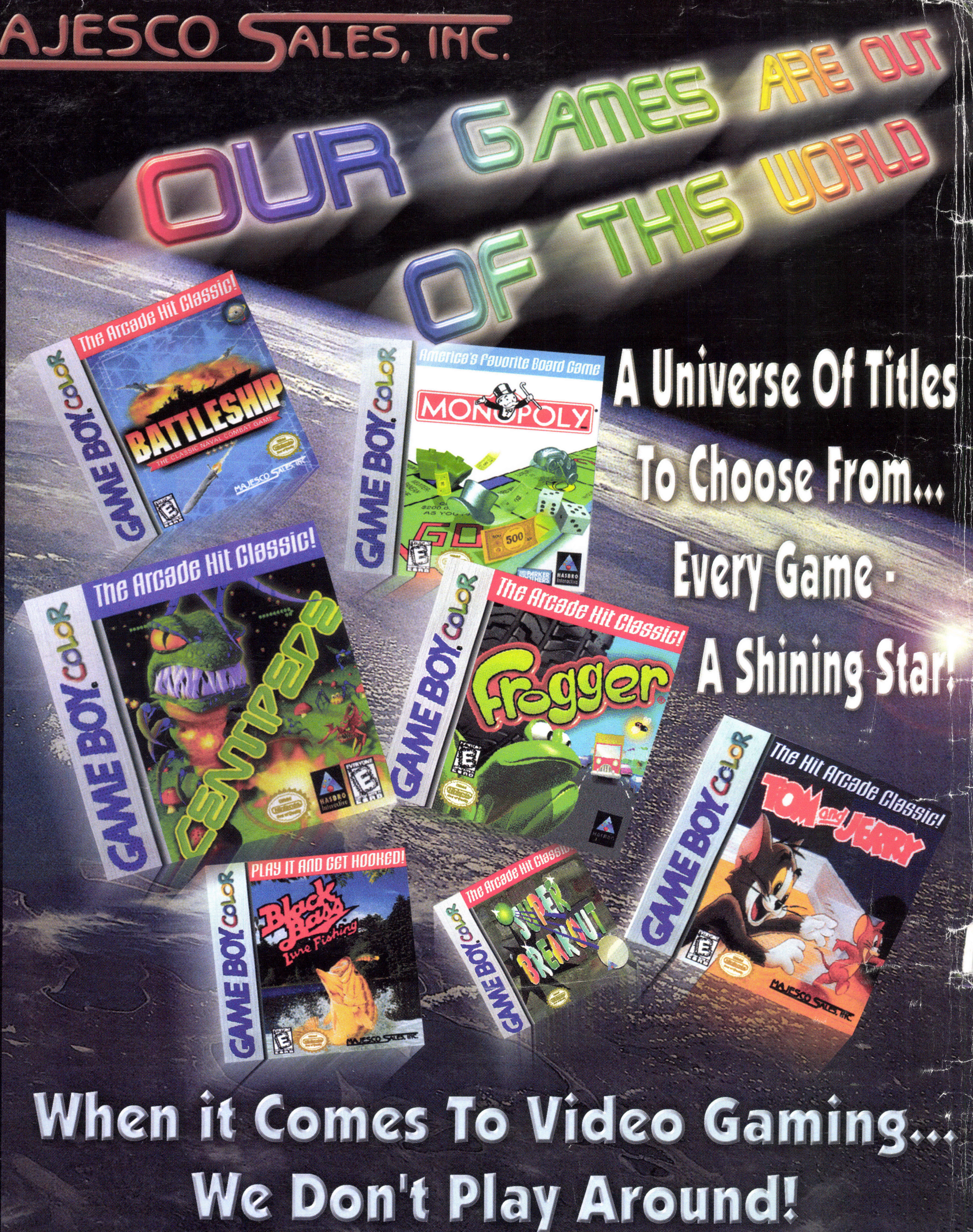
LOS ANGELES, CALIFORNIA
MAY 13—15, 1999
ELECTRONIC ENTERTAINMENT EXPO
5 YEARS NOT 5 MINUTES
GameWEEK
LEADERSHIP TAKES TIME
5 YEARS NOT 5 MINUTES
GameWEEK
Leadership Takes Time
Wear Your Button at E3 and Win $500!

E^3 Celebrates its 5th Year

By the GameWEEK Editorial Staff

For any veteran of the industry (relatively speaking of course), it's not too hard to think back to late '94 and early '95 and remember all the negative prognostications about the show. "It's gonna' fail," "We've already got CES!"and "Members of this industry simply don't have the money to have a presence at two shows" (CES & E^3—ed.) could be heard falling off the tongues of experienced and inexperienced trade-folks alike. Happily, they were wrong. Since those three days back in May of 1995, E^3 has become the place for the trade to show its wares. While you'll still see a few of these same companies at a CES, ECTS or TGS, E^3 is clearly the king. It gives members of the industry it serves a little respect (i.e., not putting them in tents) and in return, the industry has elevated it to the status of the only trade show that matters.

(continued on page 10)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EA Goes Hunting for "Big Game"

By Ben Rinaldi

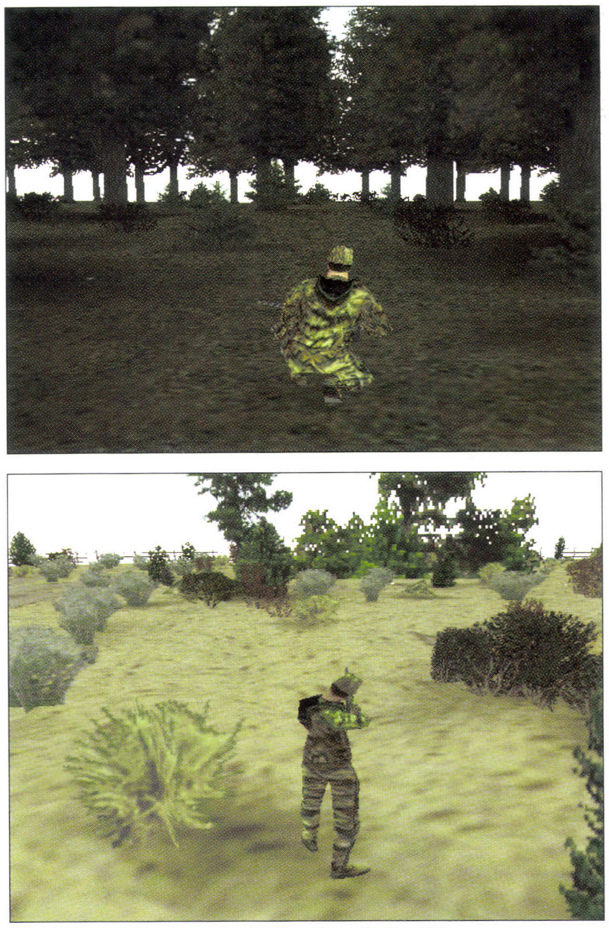
GT Interactive and WizardWorks first opened the door for hunting sims with *Deer Hunter* and now EA Sports plans to kick the door off its hinges with its own take on the genre called *Master Big Game Hunter* (working title) for the PC.

With *Master Big Game Hunter*, EA Sports plans to take outdoor hunting to new heights when it ships in the fall. The company promises features never before seen in hunting games. "Electronic Arts has recognized the mass market potential for outdoor sports and believes that it is time to make great games for this market," said Randy Dershem, executive producer for EA Sports Outdoors. "Our goal is to make Outdoor games with the same quality standard as *Madden*, *NBA Live*, *NHL* and all the other great *EA Sports* franchises.

Gamers make their way up through the ranks from "Novice" to accomplished "Master Hunter" in pursuit of North America's three native deer species—white tail, black tail and mule deer. Advanced animal AI creates a challenging hunt for hunters and action game players alike. Other key features of the game include:

- Authentic hunting in six different worlds with challenging "real world" hunting scenarios.
- A first-person or third-person perspective with multiple shooting positions, clothing and character type options.
- Gameplay modes for everyone from tenderfoot novice to accomplished master hunter in four varying modes: Practice mode, Hunting Challenge, Multiplayer competition and Open Hunt.
- LAN, Modem and Internet capabilities.
- Enhanced 3D accelerator card support.

GW



Will EA's new hunting sim be the "Madden" of its genre?

On the Move

Industry Personnel Changes

Crave Entertainment

Holly Newman, former vice president of marketing for GT Interactive, has joined Crave Entertainment. Newman will serve as the company's executive vice president of publishing. Her duties will include overseeing all of the company's publishing deals, sales programs, product development acquisition, and the strategic development of the company.

Bullfrog Productions

Les Edgar, co-founder and chairman of Bullfrog Productions, has left that position to pursue other opportunities. In his time at Bullfrog—which has spanned a dozen years—Edgar has seen the company produce some best-selling games, such as Populous, Syndicate, Magic Carpet and Theme Park, as well as coordinating the purchase of the U.K.-based Bullfrog by Electronic Arts (EA).

Apple Computer

Toni Marinovich has left Apple Computer Inc. to become the new vice president of Marketing at PhotoDisc Inc.

Origin Systems

Mark Rizzo, who until recently was the manager of online operations for Ultima Online from Origin Systems, has left the game company to join an Internet start-up called Tornado Alley. Rizzo becomes vice president of online business operations at Tornado Alley, and he'll create the server network for its upcoming online offerings.

Aztech New Media

Under a limited-term contract, A. William Nicholls has been assigned as the new chief financial officer for Aztech New Media Corp, and Gary Miller has been named VP of worldwide sales in charge of managing all of Aztech's sales channels including retail, OEM, e-commerce and direct.

Bungie Software

Bungie Software announced that Peter Tamte, former senior director of consumer marketing for Apple Computer, Inc., will join the company as executive vice president of publishing. Tamte has been responsible for Apple's consumer marketing worldwide under the direction of Steve Jobs, Apple's interim CEO.

For Up-To-The-Minute News, Visit GameDAILY.com

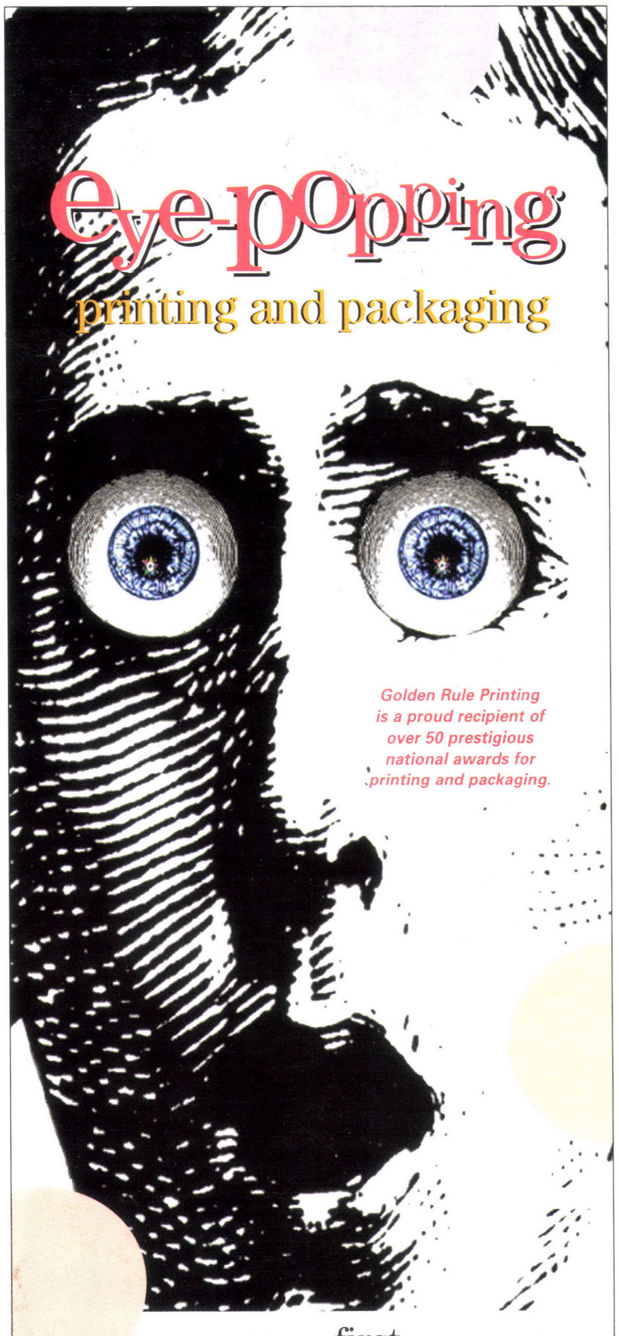
Sigma Designs Puts DVD on PC–Sigma Designs recently announced its plans to release an encoder/decoder card for PCs that enables playback and recording of DVD media. The REALmagic Digital Video Recorder (DVR) is scheduled for release in the second quarter of 1999 at a suggested price of $999. Sigma claims that the REALmagic DVR offers great consumer and commercial functionality. Businesses can use the unit to author DVD presentations and programs, while consumers can use it as a storage devices as well as a way to archive such content as computer files/applications, audio selections and home-video conversions.

GT to Launch E³ Site–GT Interactive has prepared to launch a Web site (at www.gte3.com) that will revolve around the company's participation at the Electronic Entertainment Expo (E3) in Los Angeles. The site promises "hot-off-the-press GT news straight from the floor," which will come in the form of "hands-on previews of never-before-played games, screen shots, .[downloadable AVI movies] of gameplay and interviews with our unbelievably talented stable of developers."

The site is slated to open up on Monday, May 10, with preliminary information available for the interactive-industry trade show, which runs from May 13 to 15 at the Los Angeles Convention Center.

NBC, Intel Team on Digital TV–Broadcast network NBC and chip manufacturer Intel have announced that they'll work together to create enhanced digital television programming with interactive elements. Among the offering this partnership will create include electronic program guides, the ability to send electronic greeting cards, interactive surveys and chat.

The services—which the companies claim will be available this Fall—are intended to make high-definition television (HDTV) that much more attractive to consumers. HDTV sets currently carry gigantic price tags that are relatively prohibitive to the mass-market consumer.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New Members Announced for IEMA Conference

Frustrated over E^3, retailers sign on for new event

By Ben Rinaldi

The Interactive Entertainment Merchandise Association (IEMA) Executive Summit continues to build steam and attract new members going into E^3. The exclusive three day event for retail executives and game publishers/manufacturers will be held at the Loews Coronado Resort, in San Diego, August 30—September 2, 1999.

The invitation-only conference will provide a unique forum for key retail members to conduct business and exchange ideas with leading publishers, manufacturers and distributors while enjoying private showings of new products and promotions. For game industry executives and retail channel members alike, the advantages are many. Some of the most influential buyers from top retailers will be on hand offering game company executives the opportunity to strengthen relationships, write orders and discuss some of the hottest issues concerning the interactive entertainment industry.

Loews Coronado Resort in San Diego

IEMA
Interactive Entertainment Merchants Association

Some of the forums and panels that will be covered during the event include e-commerce, emerging technologies, licensing at retail, trends and research, and censorship issues. For exclusive showcasing opportunities, contact Bob Martin at 203.761.6187 or email bob@theiema.com. **GW**

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Acclaim Unveils New Turok Game; New Name for Velocity

By Ben Rinaldi

Acclaim is using this week's E^3 show to unveil the next installment in its hugely successful franchise—*Turok: Dinosaur Hunter*. The newest addition to the series is titled *Turok: Rage Wars* available only for Nintendo 64. Acclaim is approaching this new addition to the franchise a bit differently than past sequels. *Rage Wars* is a one to four player, deathmatch-style, multiplayer-only game (a first for the console market).

The story behind *Turok: Rage Wars* goes something like this: Turok is unknowingly thrown into a tournament to battle an army of creatures vying for control of the Lost Land. Gamers will have over 15 deathmatch levels to explore and several new characters to control, including Adon, the Oblivion Deathguard, the Campaigner, and Lord of the Dead. *Rage Wars'* new features include a training mode, player skins and weapons with secondary fire functions. Those that don't have three friends to play with can still enjoy a frantic frag-fest against enemy "bots." *Rage Wars* is scheduled to ship in the fall.

Available only on Nintendo 64, the Turok series has gone on to be a multi-million seller for the Glen Cove-based game company. The first *Turok* went on to sell over a million units, and *Turok 2: Seeds of Evil* is on pace to outsell the original. As a matter of fact, *Turok 2* was recently inducted into Nintendo's million-seller "Player's Choice" program and is currently retailing for $39.99.

In related Acclaim news, the company has been talking about a game it has in development with the working title *Velocity*. (See "Now Playing at E^3," page 42.) Velocity is billed as a futuristic, "stunt-based racing" game on hoverboards. With the recent registration of the trickstyle.com domain, it seems as if the company has settled on a name it's happy with.

A spokesperson couldn't say with 100% certainty that *Trick Style* would be the final title, but did say that the tentative name would be "safe" for our E^3 coverage. The game is slated to appear in PC and Dreamcast formats in time for the holidays, and it is being developed by Criterion Studios, which, among other accomplishments, has developed *Scorched Planet*. **GW**

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Tiger Focuses on New game.com

Following in the industry trend, new colors announced for portables

By Ben Rinaldi

Like the iMac's fruity colors, Tiger's new hand-held systems will come in different colors.

Portable gaming is all the rage at the moment, thanks to the shocking success of Nintendo's Game Boy Color and the impending release of SNK's Neo Geo Pocket Color. Another player in the hand-held market, who is often overlooked, is Tiger Electronics and its game.com system.

While the original game.com's sales performance was disappointing for numerous reasons—too bulky, not enough quality games, too pricey—Tiger has listened to consumer's complaints and addressed most of their needs with the new game.com.pocket pro.

The new pocket pro has a more compact and contoured shape for improved on-the-go gaming. In addition, Tiger has taken a page out of Nintendo's book by introducing different colored casings—purple, teal, orange, green and pink—to go along with the original metal grey. In addition to the new colors, the game.com.pocket pro includes a backlit screen, built-in software, a specially designed touch-screen option and the ability to link to a PC via Tiger's Web Link.

All these options will help it stand out from its competitors, but like any system, it's the games that will ultimately decide game.com.pocket pro's fate. Tiger is headed in the right direction by acquiring some of the biggest game licenses in the industry—namely, *Frogger, Monopoly, Metal Gear Solid, WCW Wiplash, NASCAR, Deer Hunter, Command and Conquer, NBA Live, Madden NFL Football, Holyfield Boxing, Resident Evil 2, Sonic Jam, Castlevania* and *Furbyland*. Some of these game-packs will even include built-in vibration, which is a feature pioneered by Nintendo.

It's highly unlikely that the new game.com will ever threaten Game Boy Color's dominance in the hand-held market, but the sleek new design, coupled by big-name games and an attractive price point ($29.99 for the hardware and $9.99-$24.99 for software), will make game.com.pocket pro popular with consumers. The new hand-held and its slate of games can be seen in the Hasbro/Tiger booth #1146. **GW**

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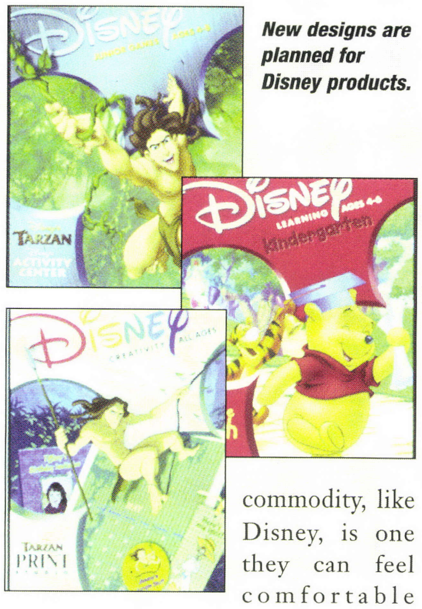
Disney Interactive Launches New Software Branding Campaign

By Karen Jones



New designs are planned for Disney products.

In an effort to help consumers and retailers to identify easier their software categories, Disney Interactive will be launching a new package design initiative this June with three releases tied to this summer's big Disney animated movie *Tarzan*. The releases are Disney's Print Studio, Tarzan ($19.99), Disney's Activity Center, Tarzan ($29.99) and Disney's Tarzan Action Game ($29.99).

Russell Kelban, director of marketing services at Disney Interactive, tells *GameWEEK* that after visiting various retailers, they felt their product line "almost looked like a jar of jelly beans, with too much multi-colored packaging." So, in order to help retailers merchandise Disney titles more effectively, they decided to develop packaging that symbolizes "the three categories we feel we're a major player in: children's and family software, learning creativity and games."

For the consumer, and in this case a parent, who is in a software store and isn't sure what to purchase, a known commodity, like Disney, is one they can feel comfortable with. The new branding initiative can only help in the decision making process, says Kelban, especially once consumers start to recognize the color scheme, which is red for learning, silver for games and white for creativity. When asked how their retail partners are responding, Kelban quotes one as confiding, "This is the best children's packaging out there yet, and it's about time someone did this." **GW**

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E^3 Feels the Wrath of G.O.D.

The Gathering unveils powerful software line-up to eager show-goers

By Ben Rinaldi

E^3 is without question the biggest annual stage for videogame companies to showcase themselves and their games. This year is no different, as many companies unveil top-secret games for the first time.

***Terminal Reality's* Nocturne**

The Gathering of Developers, in particular, is using this year's event to introduce an incredibly diverse line-up of games. In addition, it's going all-out to ensure its games stand out from the crowd. Approaching the show slightly differently than most companies, The Gathering is foregoing the traditional indoor booth of the Convention Center. Instead it will rent out an 18,000 square-foot parking lot across the street from the show dubbed "The Promised Lot." Special trailers will be set up running the company's hottest titles and a giant tent will be set up with open bar and food served to weary show-goers throughout the day.

Speaking of games, The Gathering's CEO Mike Wilson is confident that they will impress, going on record to remark, "I'd put our line-up against any of the big-boy publishers out there." That line-up includes:

FLY!—Terminal Reality

Darkstone—Delphine Software

Nocturne—Terminal Reality

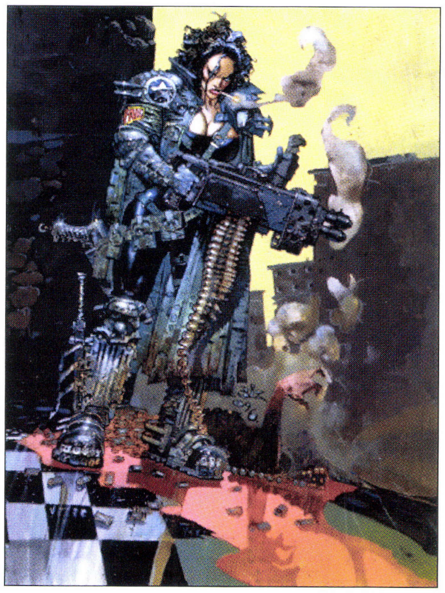
Max Payne—3DRealms

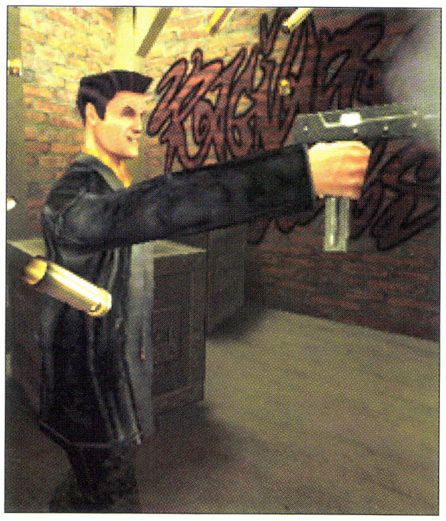
Heavy Metal: F.A.K.K.^{2}—Ritual Entertainment

KISS: Psycho Circus—Third Law Interactive

Rune—Epic Games

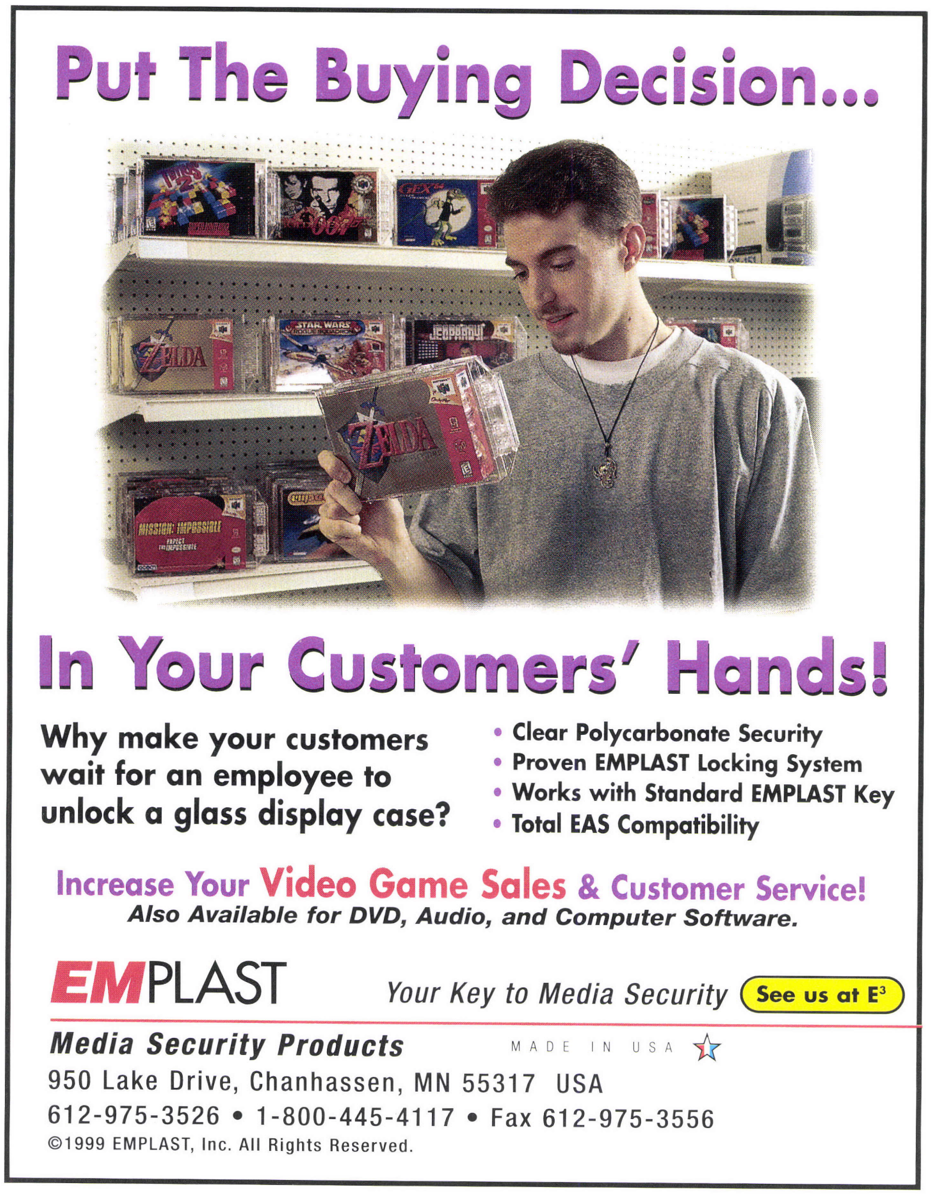
Grand Theft Auto 2—DMA Design





Top:* Max Payne *from Remedy and 3D Realms
***Left: Artwork from* Heavy Metal: F.A.K.K.^{2}**

Heavy Metal: F.A.K.K.^{2} and *Rune* should make the biggest impact with show attendees. *Heavy Metal: F.A.K.K.*^{2}'s claim to fame is that it's one of the first games to license id Software's acclaimed *Quake III* engine. *Rune* will similarly receive attention for utilizing the *Unreal II* engine. ***GW***



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Sony Wins Injunction in Connectix Emulator Suit

Jennifer Klinger

A Federal District Court has issued an order suspending current shipments of Connectix' Virtual Game Station (VGS) indefinitely. Connectix plans to appeal the decision and to continue marketing the VGS.

"This is just the first stage of a lengthy process of discovery of facts and finding of law," said Roy McDonald, president of Connectix, in a press release. "We are confident that we will be able to resume shipments once this matter has received further review at the appellate level."

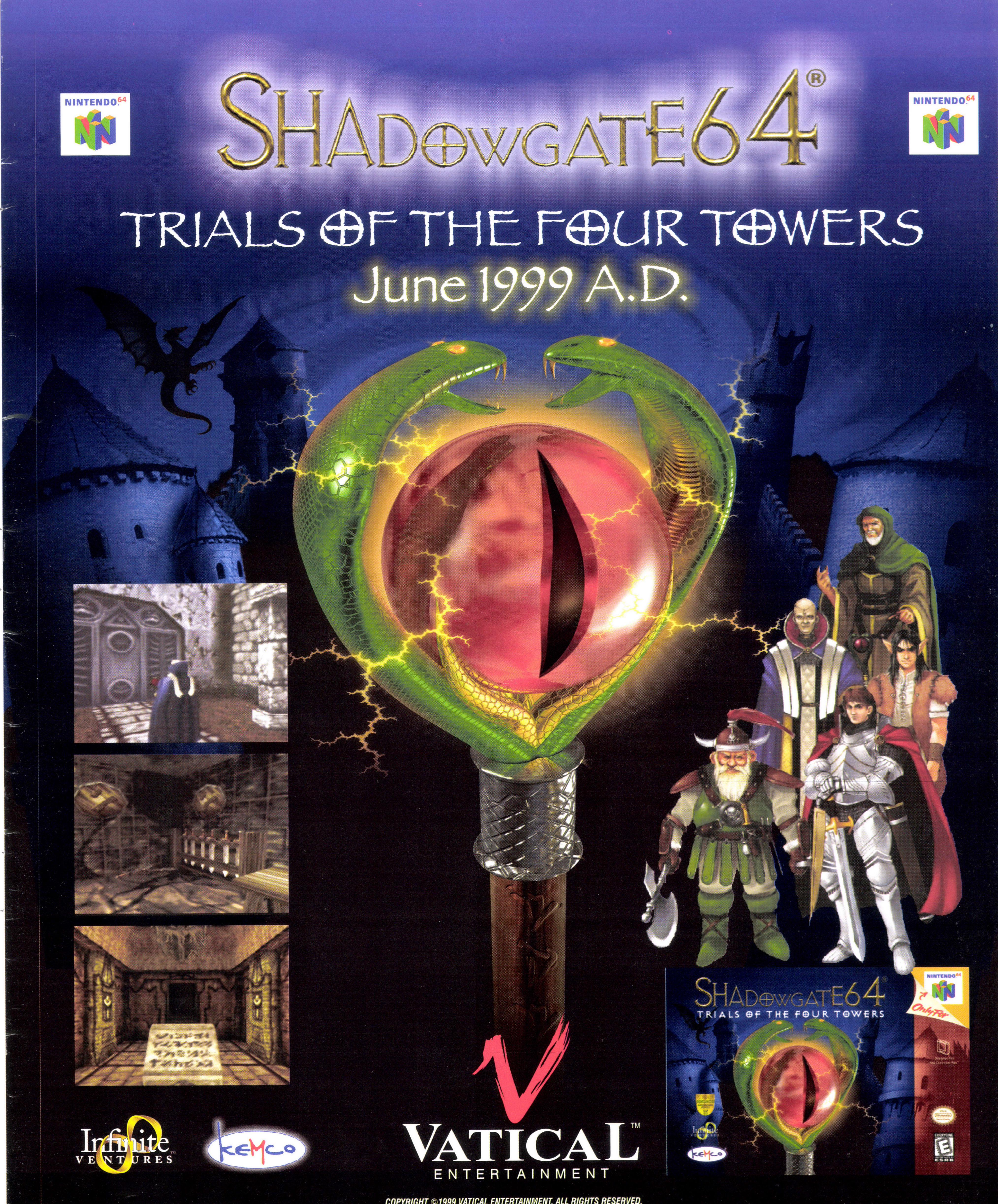
The court's ruling found that Connectix copied the PlayStation BIOS, a proprietary firmware code, to develop the VGS, violating Sony's intellectual property rights. Connectix is now legally barred from using the BIOS in current and future products and is required to deliver all copies and derivative works that were based on Sony properties to the court.

March Madness *'99 from EA Sports is a popular PSX game that gets emulated using the* VGS.

"We are pleased with the court's ruling which confirms our belief that Connectix did infringe on our copyright and intellectual property rights," said Kaz Hirai, president and chief operating officer of Sony Computer Entertainment of America, in a statement issued by Sony.

Controversy about the VGS, which is capable of playing Sony PlayStation games on Macintosh computers, started shortly after the MacWorld Expo in San Francisco several months ago. Connectix walked away from MacWorld with the "Best of Show" award for the VGS. Shortly thereafter, Sony filed suit against the company.

According to Connectix, the court's decision does not affect the VGS systems that have already shipped to stores and will still be available for purchase. ***GW***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Continued from the Cover

E^3 Celebrates its 5th Year

E^3 '95—GAMING COMES OF AGE

May of 1995 was an awesome time to be involved with the gaming industry, especially if you got into the biz because of your love of games. The 16-bit era of gaming consoles was on its way out and the buzz was heavy and strong about the next generation of console gaming: Sega's Saturn, Sony's PlayStation, and Nintendo's "Ultra 64" all loomed heavy on the domestic horizon (as it turns out, the Saturn was a *lot* closer than most any had thought…). Even the PC—a platform previously scoffed at by gamers and many game developers—was on the verge of viability thanks to the impending launch of Microsoft's Windows '95. Speculation ran rampant. Would newcomer Sony have what it took to make its console a success? Would the Saturn parallel Genesis's success? Would the sheets finally come down off of Nintendo's 64-bit dream? And what about the PC end of things? Did Microsoft really have the goods to make the heretofore-unwieldy PC a desirable platform for both gamers and developers? To be sure, E^3 '95 was all about the hardware. There was so much mystery, so many unknowns, that even the most jaded games biz exec was champing at the bit to get on the show floor and see the goods.

E^3 '95 did its job in replacing speculation with facts useful for buying decisions, but it also did a lot more. It gave the business a blank canvas upon which to paint its own image. From the get-go, attendees understood that this wasn't going to be like an oil truck trade show. Games were about fun, and while the trade show is about business, E^3 and companies that attended it did their damnedest to ensure that there was a healthy mix of the two on the floor. Pitches were mixed with pitchers. Product demos were mixed with booth babes. Fighting game tournaments mixed with press conferences and workshops. Most importantly, though, buyers mixed with sellers, PR folk mixed with editors, and faces were attached to names. To many of the newer and smaller developers in the industry, this was the first time they got to meet many of the people with whom they did business on a frequent basis. So, as much as the show was about the advent of new hardware, it was also about the advent of a tighter industrial community—a community comprised of people who actually knew what the person on the other end of the line or email address looked like. And in the end—as we all know—relationships like these do just as much in the pursuit of the bottom line as good product and good marketing.

In all, it was a great show. It was a lot of fun—and judging by the fact that we're now entering the fifth—it must have been profitable for all concerned. While it's impossible to sum up an experience so viscerally over-the-top as E^3, here's a highlight reel of the things most attendees will agree defined it as the gaming trade show.

PSX ANTICIPATION DOMINATES THE FLOOR

No one really questioned the power of the PlayStation heading into the '95 show…sporadic showings of its graphical muscle prior to E^3 took care of that. The big question—the *huge* question—that loomed over the console was this: how would Sony—a neophyte in this market—handle the launch and support of its much-ballyhooed product? The 3DO Multiplayer—which was making a futile effort on the show floor that year…its last significant showing—hung in everyone's mind as a potential path for the PSX. There was a rampant fear of an overpriced, under performing piece of hardware with non-existent or poor third party support. When the doors opened to the show on the first day, many—if not all—of those fears were dispelled. An unbelievable array of quality games, both third party and first party, bloated Sony's booth almost to the breaking point. Not only did they look and play amazingly, Sony was actually wheeling and dealing like the savviest game biz entity! It scored a six month exclusive on *MK3*, one of the year's hottest fighting games in a franchise with a demonstrable, huge fan base. It signed an exclusivity deal with Namco for *Tekken*, a true *VF*-killer and one of the most impressive fighting games ever. Steve Race & Co. were going to do it! Not only did their hardware kick ass, they were brilliant in their marketing strategy; they understood it was the games that brought consumers and focused their efforts accordingly. Few people left E^3 '95 with any doubt in their mind that PSX would rule the roost of the 32-bit era of gaming.

SEGA SATURN—LAUNCHED PREMATURELY AT THE SHOW

Almost the antithesis of Sony was Sega. Their show space was a jumble of unimpressive Genesis games, Genesis-to-PC ports, and Saturn stuff. Unfortunately, the titles they chose to show-off their forthcoming "über-console" did nothing to really wow the press or retailers. Games like Bug! and *Virtua Fighter*—while certainly ok—failed to elicit the same "wow" as Sony's stuff. But they were believing their own hype at that point and in a move that they hoped would echo their early defeat of Nintendo in the 16-bit era, they chose to launch the under powered 32-bitter at the show. Billboards announcing the console's availability for "only" $399 were taken out around the convention center and news of it spread over the wire like wild fire. While it was certainly an exciting development, it turned out to be an ill-conceived move on Sega's part. They introduced an overpriced piece of hardware at the beginning of the most lackluster sales' season of the year to a limited number of retailers. The alienated retailers left out of the launch would prove to be a major thorn in the side of the under-powered console in the months to come.

WIN '95 & THE EMERGENCE OF THE PC AS VIABLE GAME PLATFORM

The first E^3 marked the first time there was any real kind of excitement about PC game product. To say the PC's past performance as a gaming platform was lackluster would be an overstatement. But Microsoft was investing *lots* of money into changing that perception. Their principle weapon in the war against the cynics was the much ballyhooed Win 95. It promised uber-powerful SDK's, plug & play compatibility for accessories (opening up the control schemes available to developers), unparalleled developer support, and, most importantly, a potential installed base of millions. The actual product shown on the floor—mostly console ports and a few original titles—wasn't that great…but the promise of the foundation Microsoft was laying wasn't lost on anyone. They wanted a piece of the games market and they were going to make sure their OS facilitated that desire. While many would say they've had mixed results, no one can contest the fact that the PC today is considered an extremely viable gaming platform thanks to the introduction of this OS.

JAGUAR HEADSET, THE BELL RINGS FOR ATARI

There were two "rubber neck" booths at the first E^3 and Atari's was one of them. The "64-bit" Jaguar had been out for quite some time and simply failed to garner any serious developer or consumer support. It was sputtering along, almost on its last legs, when May of '95 rolled around. To everyone's surprise, though, the old-school dynasty had a surprise showing: the Jaguar "VR Helmet." Shown behind closed doors, it was a neat little contraption that was actually worth the wait time to try. It garnered some significant buzz among attendees, but the death knell ringing in their booth superseded it.

3DO—DYING ON THE VINE

3DO's booth was the other rubbernecking spot at the '95 E^3. Its 32-bit console—the 3DO Real Multiplayer—had been out for a while and—like the Jaguar—had simply failed to garner the necessary support from consumers and developers. It was a different story with 3DO, though. Their hardware was actually decent. And they actually did nab a few killer apps (*Street Fighter II* among them). The problem was pricing.

(continued on page 12)

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Continued from page 10

E^3 Celebrates its 5th Year

While the price of the 3DO would ultimately plummet to $199, the hardware had been at retail for a long time at price points ranging from 4 to 700 bucks. That pricing combined with the looming threat of the more modestly priced (slightly, in Sega's case) 32 bitters spelled ultimate doom for the console. But they went out with a bang. Their '95 booth was large and spread out w/ *lots* of titles "in development." Ultimately, only a small percentage of in-progress games shown on the floor would ship…but you can't say they didn't try.

NINTENDO—ULTRA 64 BAGGED IN FAVOR OF SNES KI

While Sega and Sony were going nuts in their booths towing the "next generation of consoles" line, Nintendo stood steadfastly to its 16-bit workhorse, the SNES. Their much chattered-about Ultra 64 was a no show. Dominating a huge chunk of their significant booth space was a port of their popular arcade fighter, *Killer Instinct*, on the SNES. While most people groused about the lack of Ultra 64 info, just about everyone walked away impressed by *KI* on the SNES. For a 16-bit port of an extremely (comparatively) complex and graphic-intensive game, it looked simply amazing. And judging by the record-breaking numbers the game did upon release just before the PSX, Nintendo made the right choice about what to show.

E^3 EXPO 1996

E^3 '96—GAMING AGES A BIT AND GOES TO STRIP CLUBS

A lot happened in the year between the freshman and sophomore E^3's. A lot. The Saturn had been released for about a year to less-than-awesome sales. Sony's PlayStation came out right on schedule the previous September and had blown the doors off the Saturn with its competitive pricing (which Sega was forced to match), superior technology, and unbelievably strong line up of games. Microsoft unleashed its much-ballyhooed OS…but the games didn't come quite as quickly or as strongly as everyone had hoped. And Nintendo finally got around to unveiling the newly renamed N64 in the West. The proliferation of all this hardware in the previous year led to an E^3 utterly dominated by jaw-slackening software. If the previous year had been all about the hardware, then this year was most definitely all about the software—N64 notwithstanding. The razors were in the hands of millions and this year, the razor blades would finally start to yield a profit…a big profit, as the numbers at the end of the year would show.

From an operational point of view, the second E^3 bore all the marks of a show starting to hit its stride. The layout was better, though far from perfect. The awkward pre-show fumbling that plagued meeting planners the previous year was replaced by a more organized campaign of scheduling, which resulted—in all circles—in a much lower "missed meeting" rate. Even the social events, which the year before seemed to be somewhat haphazard and difficult to plan for (with a few notable exceptions i.e,. Sony), were more effectively managed…the parties alone spawned a website dedicated to tracking them. Sony and Eidos came in as the clear winners in this area…the parties they threw at this E^3 are still talked about by many of the attendees. More than simply fun places in which to get hammered, parties like these were beginning social traditions and rituals, the earmarks of a self-sustaining and healthy industry.

But what were the insiders who attended these parties talking about over drinks (aside, or course, from booth babes)? While many of their conversations probably wouldn't be suitable for print (at least not here…), you can be sure that the following were very hot topics of conversation during those three days in May of 1996:

TOMB RAIDER—KILLER GAMEPLAY GETS SOME RENDERED DD'S

While it may be hard to remember, there was a time when neither Lara Croft nor her boobs were synonymous with "video games." The '96 E^3, though, did a lot to change that. Surprisingly, though, Eidos took the high road in the birthing of their voluptuous protagonist. While Lara's, uh, "assets" were clearly marketed/hyped as part of the *Tomb Raider* experience, Eidos and Core took great pains to ensure that everyone who saw their budding uber-franchise also got a chance to play it…and that's what laid the seed for the golden status of *Tomb Raider* today. Everyone—from journalists to buyers—was blown away by *TR*'s heretofore unseen package of graphics, control, and, most importantly, fun. By the end of the '96 E^3, there was virtually no doubt in the right-minded folk of the biz that TR was gonna be huge.

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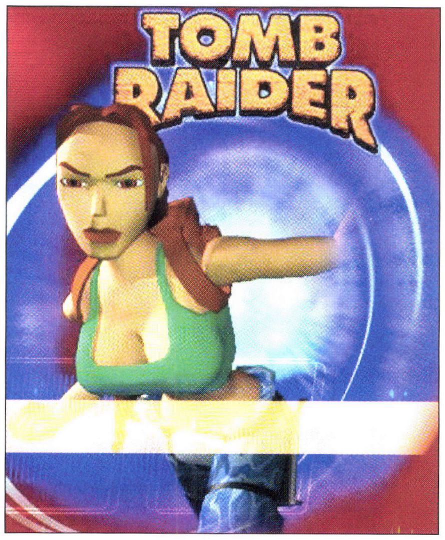
E^3-back in la la land. The industry was happy to leave Atlanta.



3DFX AND RENDITION—3D CARDS ON THE RISE

In the years leading up to the '96 E^3, many a brow furrowed at the notion of consumer level 3D cards. Many of the industry's biggest players had tried and failed in this arena already, so to say that skepticism about such products was high would be an understatement. But two little-known companies at the time—3dfx and Rendition—were doing their best to dispel that skepticism and replace it with confidence that a successful consumer level 3D card was, indeed, possible. Buzz about 3dfx Voodoo and Rendition Verite-based cards began on the first day of the show and reached a deafening crescendo by the last. All of the hottest PC games like *Tomb Raider* sported the "Powered by 3dfx" or "Powered by Rendition" stickers on their demo kiosks. And—for the first time in the

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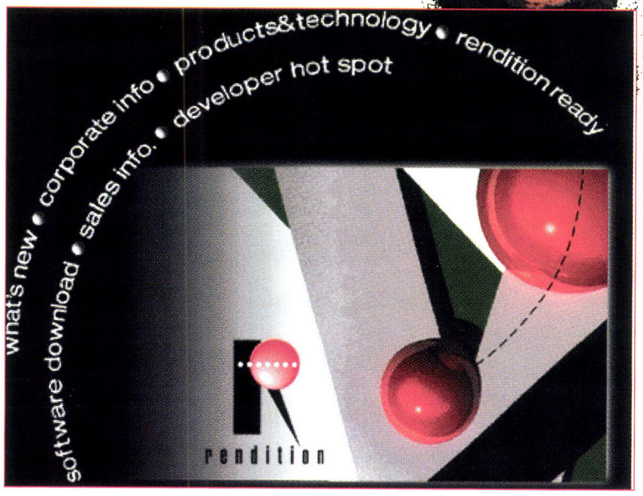
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3dfx versus Rendition in '96: to this day the battle for supremacy of the 3D graphics market continues.

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Continued from page 12

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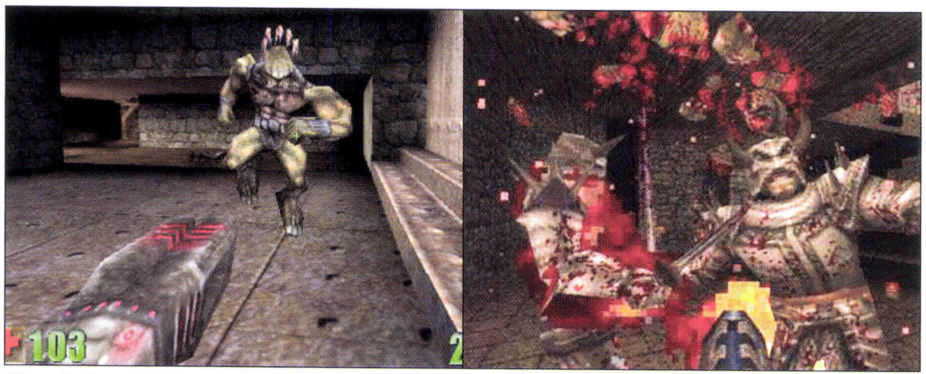

Many believe that Unreal *(left) should have been compared to* Quake II *instead of* Quake *(right).*

history of 3D hardware—there actually seemed to be a significant difference between software and hardware versions of the games. The hardware versions were replete with staggering graphical effects most people had always assumed would be the domain of consoles. The write-ups these cards received in the ensuing months and years laid the groundwork for the current state of consumer level 3D hardware, and if you were on the show floor in '96, you saw its beginning.

QUAKE AND UNREAL—KILLER, KILLER APPS

Doom began a PC gaming craze the likes of which the platform had never seen. People loved running around in 3D or 3D-esque environments and blowing the hell out of each other. But it had been more than a year since *Doom* was released, and the faithful were still waiting for the follow-up, titled *Quake*. Both journos and the buying force liked what they saw of this follow-up on the show floor in '96. True 3D environments. Staggering multiplayer abilities. Unparalleled user-friendliness. Id had done it again, and the appearance of *Quake* at E^3 set one thing in stone: the PC was no longer the red-haired stepchild of the gaming world. The platform had the potential to support experiences every bit as good as those found on the consoles. Building on the buzz created by id, a little company called Epic MegaGames—who up until then had only done pinball games and platformers—was walking around the show floor with a laptop. On the laptop was a game most everyone agreed would be the *Quake*-killer (even though *Quake* wasn't even out yet), *Unreal*. While history demonstrates that the game Epic showed wasn't what finally shipped and that *Unreal* should have been compared to a game that no one had seen yet (*Quake II*), the fact of the matter is that this E^3 was the birthing ground for two of the biggest PC gaming titles ever…but unlike other trends that are ignored in their first appearance, everyone who saw these games knew instantly that they were going to be huge. They would carve out a niche in the PC gaming world so large that marketing to it alone would guarantee sales of over 100K.

E^3 EXPO 1997

E^3 '97—GAMING AGES, GOES TO STRIP CLUB, AND WINS AT THE CASINO

Grumbling about the location of the '97 E^3 began even before the '96 show ended. Atlanta. Who the hell wanted to go to Atlanta? With very few—but notable—exceptions, the entire industry was located on the West Coast. In addition to the inconvenience, the costs associated with attending the show soured it for many. The travel budgets required to bring the necessary staff to Atlanta from LA or San Francisco were astronomical. Not surprisingly, attendance at this year's show was down significantly (anywhere from 10 to 30% from the previous year, depending on who you talk to). While this invariably sucked for the people who couldn't make it, the reduced attendance made wandering the show floor, getting demos, and talking to people without having to yell a very nice experience when compared with the sound and fury of the previous year's show.

The location wasn't the only thing groused about during the '97 show. Rumor, speculation, and anticipation for console hardware had dominated '95. '96 was the year of awesome software. '97 was devoid of the urgent speculation and anticipation that surrounded the previous two events. While there was certainly no shortage of cool stuff, no one thing (or genre of thing, for that matter) dominated the buzz. Rather than a product or technology, post-show buzz was centered almost exclusively on the fact that nothing there really commanded center stage.

But even at this relatively tame and ho-hum show (by comparison to previous shows of course…you wanna talk ho hum, go to a vacuum cleaner trade show…), there were a couplea' things causing a stir…here are a few of them.

GAME COMPANY GOES CRAZY IN WEST HALL

This is one of the show highlights I feel blessed to actually have seen with my own two eyes. Attendees of the '97 E^3 probably remember the ungodly location of "the West Hall." It was basically like the Special Ed room of E^3. The huge vendors like Microsoft, GT, Sierra, etc. were in the main hall while a mess of smaller vendors/publishers/developers/etc. were located a 3-5 minute walk away in a completely separate building. Businesses that were relying on foot traffic to generate interest in their products were devastated…because no one felt the need to make the trek to the other, smaller building.

SIERRA DESERTS…SORTA'

In a move that shocked many attendees of the '97 E^3, Sierra & co. (Davidson, Blizzard, etc.) rented a separate Expo hall to show off their products. On the upside, they had an entire building dedicated to doing nothing but building their brands. On the downside, the hall—while not miles away—required a short bus ride if you were going to make it there and back to the main expo hall for your next meeting. While those with moderately packed schedules didn't have too much a problem with this, a lot of people with meetings every half-hour (which defined many attendees) just couldn't set aside the slice of time required to go. It was an interesting move on their part which resulted in a lot of chatter concerning their reasoning i.e., "If Sierra thinks it's too expensive to set up on the show floor, can the other biggies be far behind?" While there had always been off-site meeting places, Sierra was the first of the big ones to completely jump ship. Perhaps the best testament to E^3's standing viability is the fact that Cendant Software (Sierra & co.) returned to the show floor the following year.

SIERRA STUDIOS
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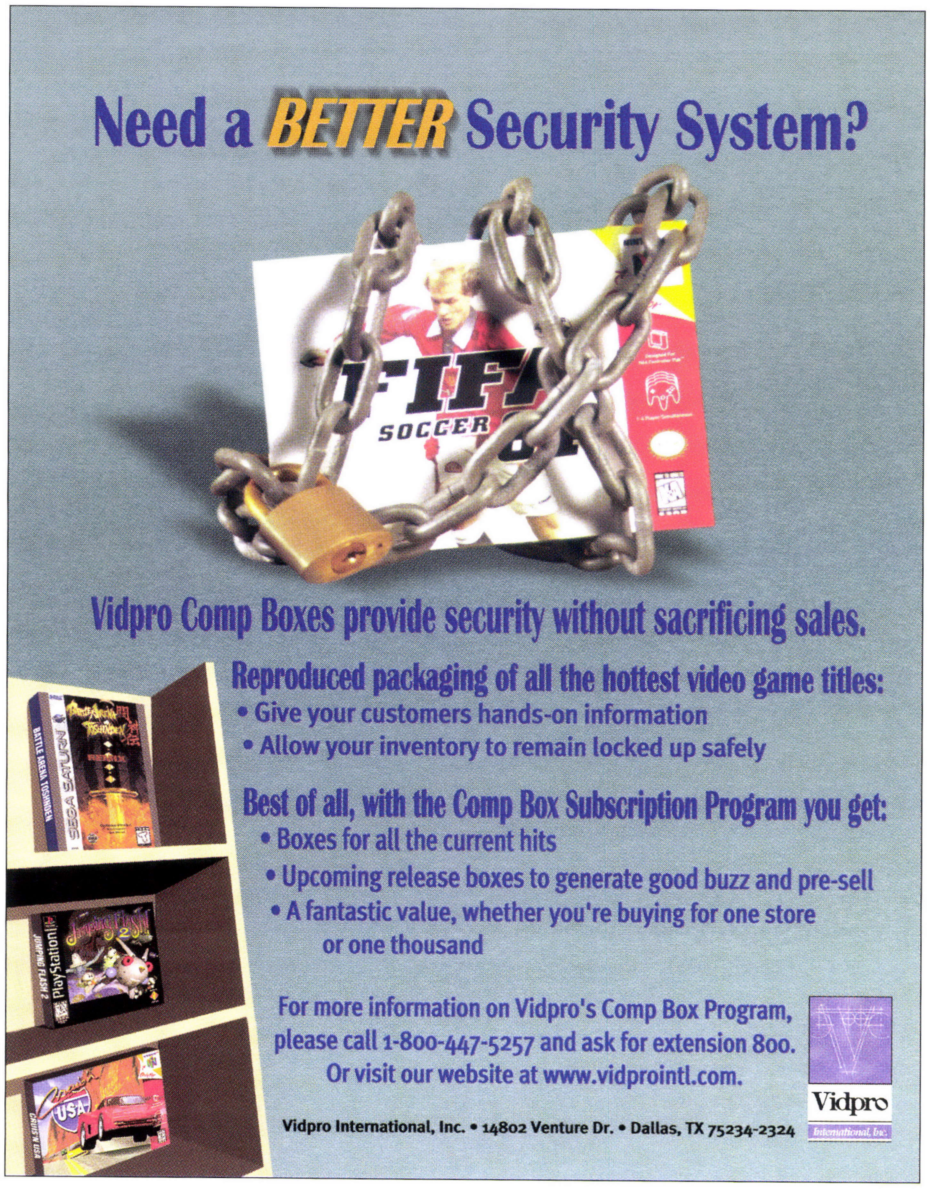
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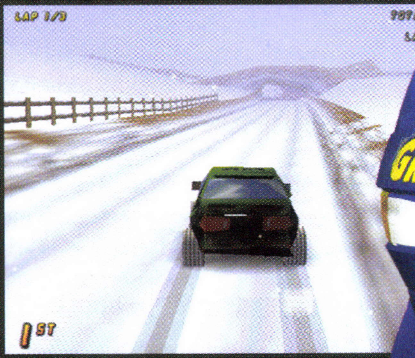

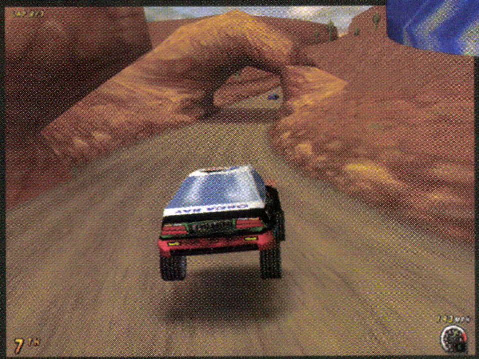

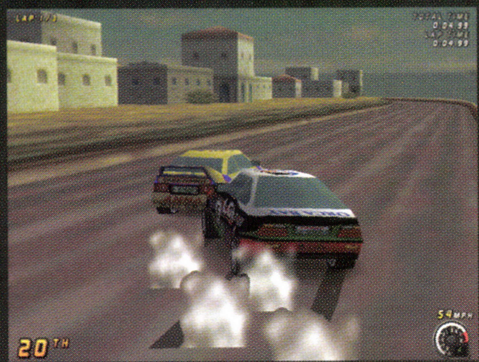

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Continued from page 14

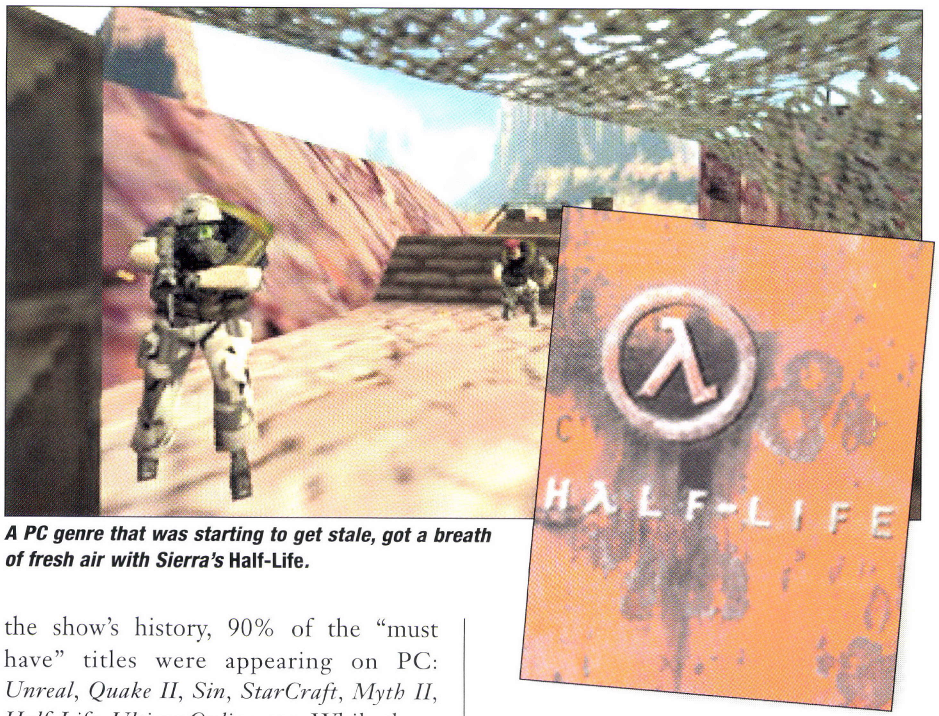
E^3 Celebrates its 5th Year

E3 EXPO
1998

E3 '98—GAMING AGES, GOES TO STRIP CLUB, GOES TO CASINO, AND GETS LUCKY

Going to E^3 '98 was like visiting the home of an old friend. While the layout had changed somewhat, everyone felt relatively comfortable with Atlanta and its expansive floor space. Further, after three shows, virtually all of the show's attendees knew exactly what to expect. Pre-show scheduling was a snap when compared with previous years'. Knowing how to navigate among the copious "Peachtrees" in Atlanta allowed everyone to make post-show plans that had some basis in fact e.g., understanding that getting from one Peach Tree to another wasn't always a two-minute cab drive...more often than not, it was a half-hour. The urgency of previous years was replaced with a kind of calm cool that always sets in when something becomes habitual. Formal introductions were replaced by "Hey, long time no speak" and ties were being eroded by game Tees. The traditions established during previous shows were in full effect. Sony erected its own stadium for its fabled party. Sega also threw a swingin' shin dig. And, of course, Eidos couldn't be left out of the outrageous party circuit.

On the product front, the '98 E^3 recovered slightly from the "ho hums" that plagued the previous year's show. The "3D Card as Game Console" precept was buttressed by competition to 3dfx, which formed something not dissimilar from the console wars. Hand in hand with the flowering of the 3D market was the perceived maturation of the PC gaming market. For the first time in the show's history, 90% of the "must have" titles were appearing on PC: *Unreal*, *Quake II*, *Sin*, *StarCraft*, *Myth II*, *Half-Life*, *Ultima Online*, etc. While there was no shortage of console games on the floor, few of them managed to capture the imagination of the crowd like their PC competition. There was—of course—*Thrill Kill* (formerly *Slaughter & Mutilation*) for the PSX. It's unadulterated brutality and gore managed to produce quite a buzz...at least until EA bought Virgin/Westwood and had it killed. *Zelda 64* was there, too. Hands down, it was the biggest of the console games there. Sega's booth was just too much of a mess to get into at this point...but let's just say they weren't showing the Dreamcast (except to select individuals behind closed doors), and Saturn was three parsecs past dead. In all, it was the PC's show. With 3D card manufacturers finally providing developers with the juice required to make eye-popping games—and with no licensing fees associated with making games on it—the PC was establishing itself as a favorite.



***A PC genre that was starting to get stale, got a breath of fresh air with Sierra's* Half-Life.**

Even the driest of trade shows can't be devoid of chatter, rumor, and speculation. And to be sure, '98 was far from the driest (see: '97). Here's a brief run-down of the stuff that attendees just couldn't stop talking about during those three days in '98:

HALF-LIFE—BREATHES NEW LIFE INTO A STAGNATING GENRE

This was a huge wild card tucked in the back corner of then-Cendant's/Sierra's booth. It was the only one of the *Quake / Quake II*-licensed games that *appeared* to do something unique. But it was almost impossible to tell if Valve was infusing their baby with just enough bells and whistles to make it appear revolutionary or if it was, indeed, the groundbreaking experience it claimed to be. Conversations on the topic were hot and heavy at most post-show events. "It's a clone" was met in equal parts by "It's like nothing I've ever seen before." History shows that the latter group was much closer to the actual truth.

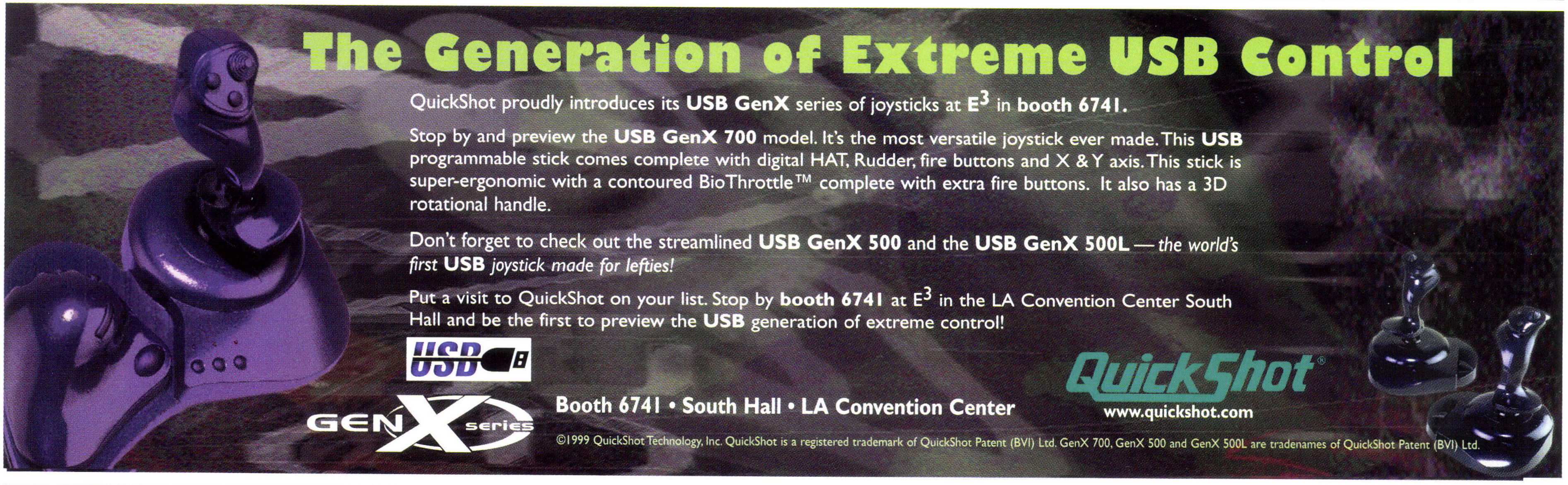
G.O.D.—INDEPENDENT PUBLISHERS ON TRIAL

Mike Wilson and Co. ensured that everyone knew his brainchild would be appearing on the show floor with titles that would put their competition to shame. But G.O.D.'s booth at the '98 E^3 was about more than just the games, it begged the question that had been looming over the show since the first E^3: is there still a place for the "kids in the garage" in a $5 + billion industry? While G.O.D.'s lineup of talent is far from a garage-based start-up, the questions are the same. Can small developers—sans the cash of monolithic publishers, like GT or Sierra—carve themselves out a piece of the pie? Since last May, they've released *Railroad Tycoon* to both critical and retail success, so the tentative answer is "yes, they can." But will it continue? Or, more importantly, can it continue? The '99 E^3 will be a good place to see....

THE DEATH OF CONVERGENCE

At long last, it appeared that this cursed word was erased from the vocabulary of game publishers everywhere. "Siliwood" and "Interactive Movies" finally retreated into the realm of "God, I Wish I Never Thought of That." The realization hit many at the show like a brick wall...we had become so used to seeing this garbage

(continued on page 18)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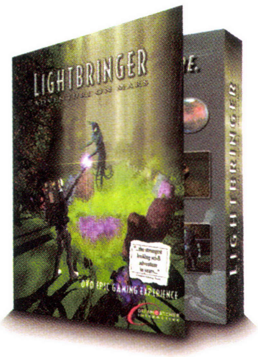
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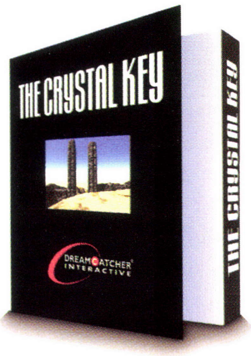
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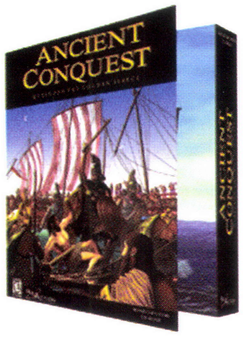
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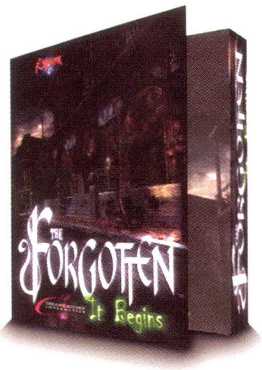
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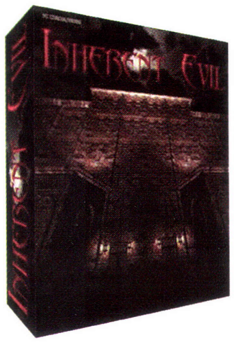
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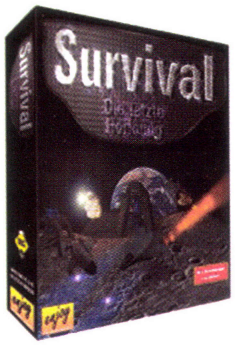

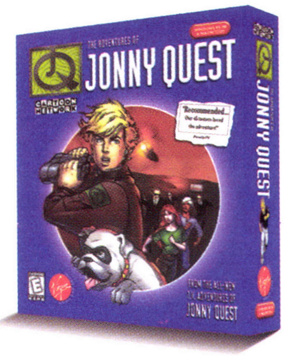
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Continued from page 16

E^3 Celebrates its 5th Year

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EverQuest
Music
Ultima Online

Origin's **Ultima Online** *and 989/Sony's* **EverQuest** *laid the essential groundwork for an online gaming profitability model.*

in at least a few high profile booths every year that its absence struck a resounding, positive chord. While—without question—a convergence of sorts is happening e.g., the blending of the PC into the realm of household appliances, its convergence with Hollywood appears to have been (mercifully) nipped in the bud.

"INTERNET AS GAMING PLATFORM"

While "Online Gaming" garnered *lots* of buzz at both the '97 and '96 shows, the '98 show was really the first time that the buzz yielded any kind of real potential. *FireTeam*, *Ultima Online*, *EverQuest*, and a handful of other Internet-only games marked the official entry of a new kind of gaming, a kind dreamt about for a long time by a lot of people. To be certain, these games weren't the ideal demonstrations of the genre they introduced. *Ultima Online* had a lawsuit filed against it by disgruntled consumers. But the fact that they were actually doing it was a portend of good things...for so long, we heard about theoretical applications and saw technology demos. Now, it was finally happening. You can bet in years to come—when Internet-only games reign supreme—that industry pundits will look back to this E^3 as the year it "all began."

PIRACY

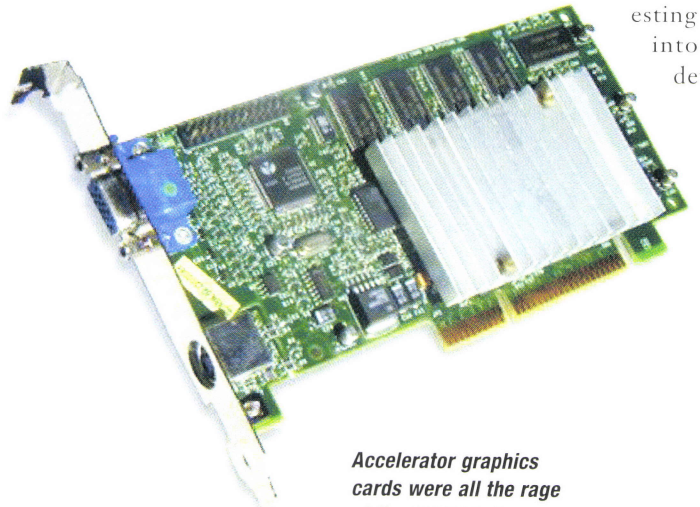
Like Internet-only gaming, Piracy (the software kind, not the "Ay, matey" kind) has been an evergreen topic of conversation at all E^3's. But it took a definite front row seat at the '98 show. The boom in Internet users combined with ever-advancing software piracy techniques resulted in an almost frenzied environment of "Oh my God! We're losing billions to these pirates!" And for the first time, it wasn't just Nintendo, Sega, & Sony sounding the alarms. PC game makers got into the act, as well. "Warez" occupied as much conversation as "back up copies." Has it made a whole lot of difference in the year since? Well, Yahoo removed their "Rec>computers>software> games>warez" category, companies that sell modded PlayStations have retreated underground, and the Dr. 64 (an N64 cart-copying unit) is nowhere to be found. So that's good. But in a twisted turn of events, the PC and the consoles are on opposite sides of the fence, thanks to console emulators designed for the PC (i.e., Bleemo). This E^3 will undoubtedly play host to hot debates about PC vs. Console piracy.

E^3 EXPO 1999

E^3 '99—GAMING LIKELY TO END UP IN TREATMENT CENTER

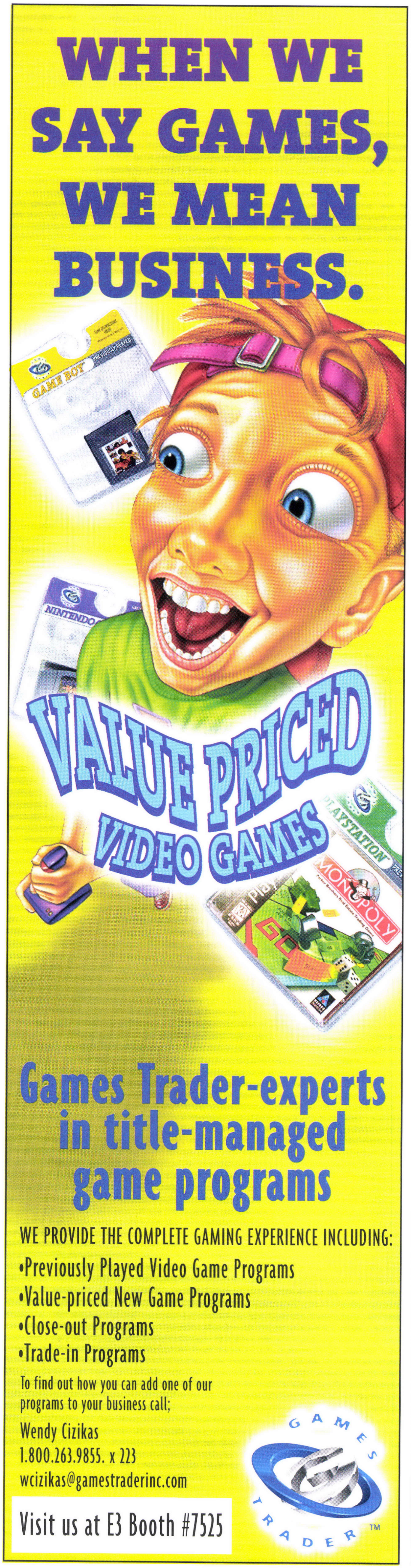
It's tough to say what few anecdotes, games, or pieces of hardware will best characterize this show when industry folk reflect on it five years from now. Here are a few guesses:

- Surely, Sega's North American debut of the Dreamcast will be among the things talked about...even in the face of Sony's show-spoiling PSX 2 announcement, Sega seems to have gotten their ducks in a row: good price point, good launch date, and a solid launch strategy. Could this be the birthing place for Sega's second dynasty?
- Sony will likely be showing the PSX 2 behind closed doors and NDA's that provide the death penalty for infringement...expect a low but fervent murmur about this ober-console.
- On the PC front, domination of the consumer 3D card market is heating up. Watch for a rivalry between the Voodoo 3 & TNT2 the likes of which we haven't seen since Voodoo 1 faced off against Rendition's Verite lo these many years ago.
- While Win '9X's spot as the PC gaming platform of choice isn't really threatened, it'll be interesting to see how competing OS's e.g., Linux, figure into the floor-demo plans of some developers/publishers.
- I can say with 100% certainty that at least 90% of show-goers will reflect back on the '99 E^3 as the place where they got "more loaded than they've ever been in their lives."



Accelerator graphics cards were all the rage at the 1996 E^3 show.

Whichever of these predictions do or do *not* come true, one thing's for certain: E^3 '99 should make us all happy because its very existence means we're in a business that's both fun and booming, a rare combination you'd be hard pressed to duplicate in just about any other biz. So, enjoy, and always remember: there's at least one picture of every stupid thing you've ever done at an E^3. *GW*



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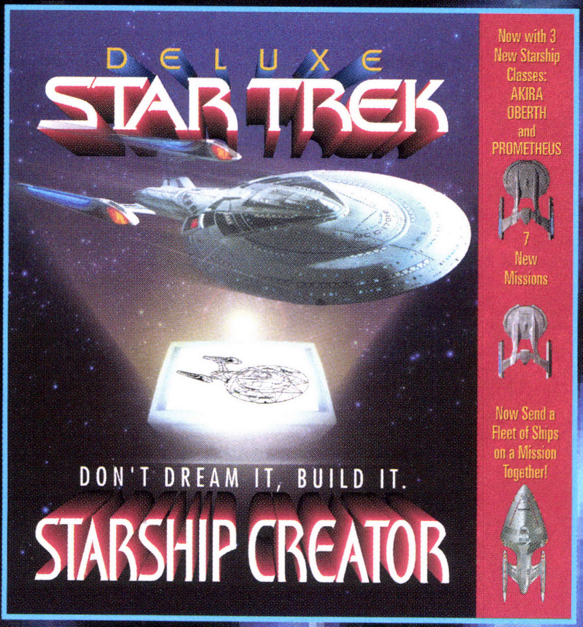
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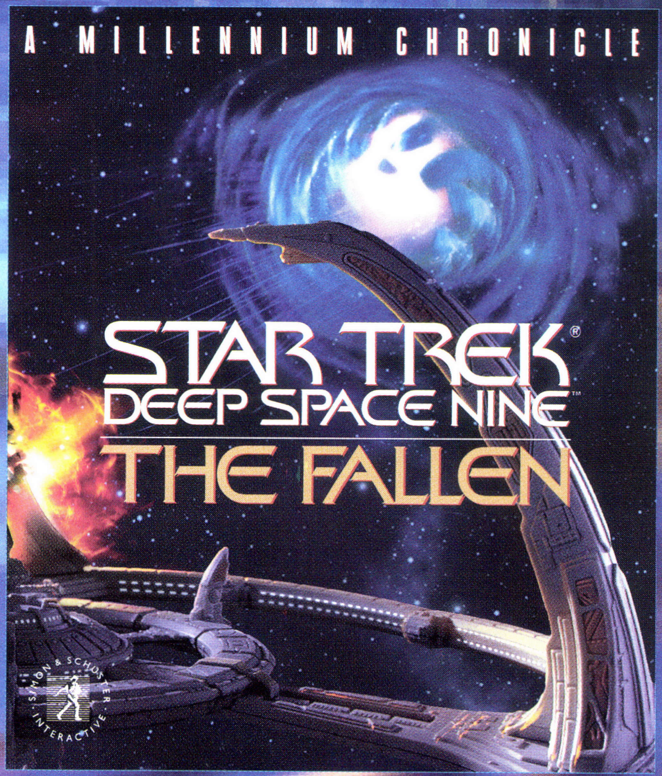
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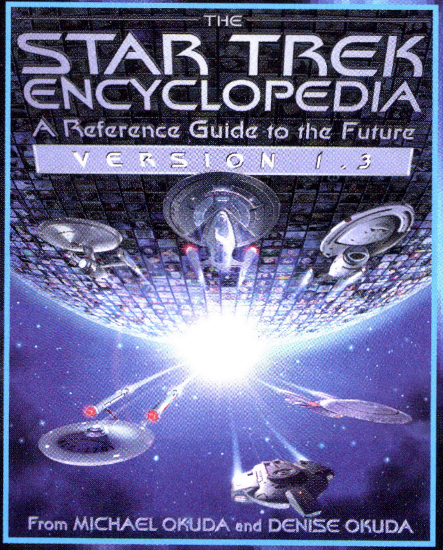
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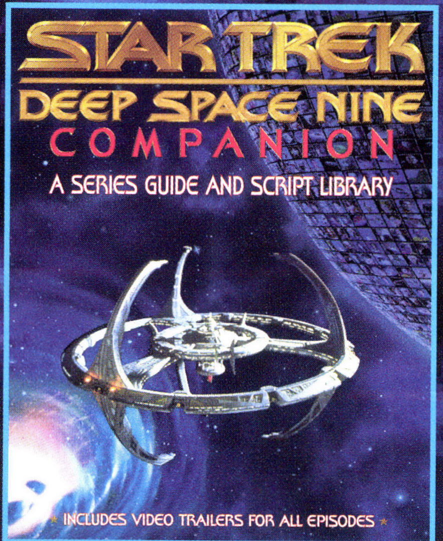
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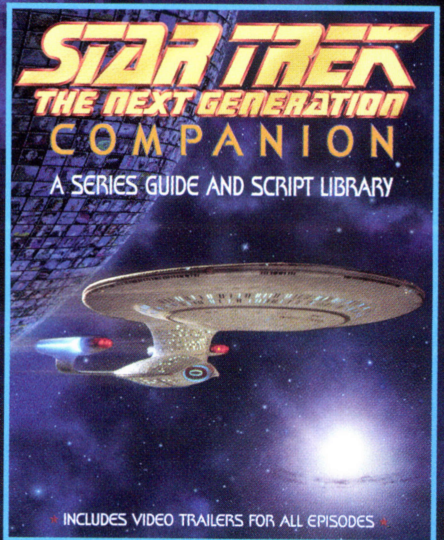
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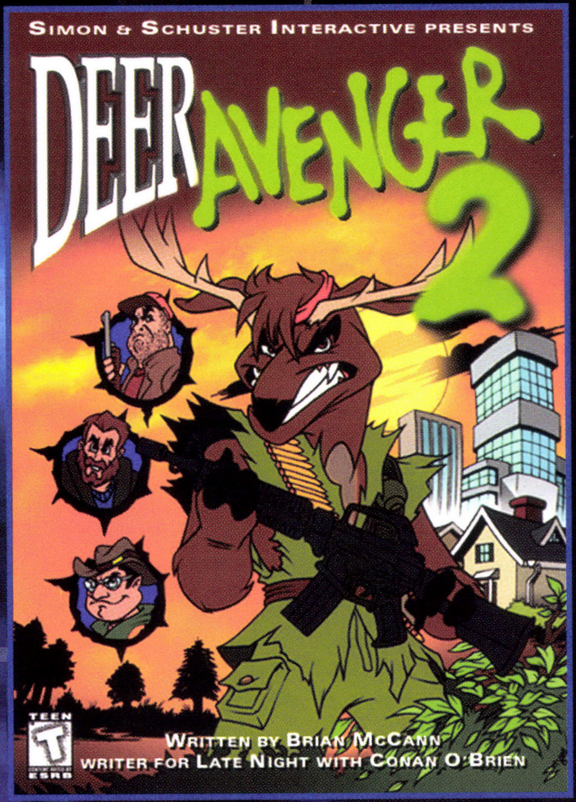
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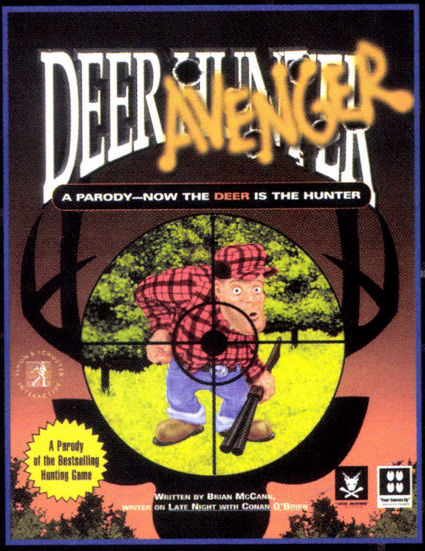
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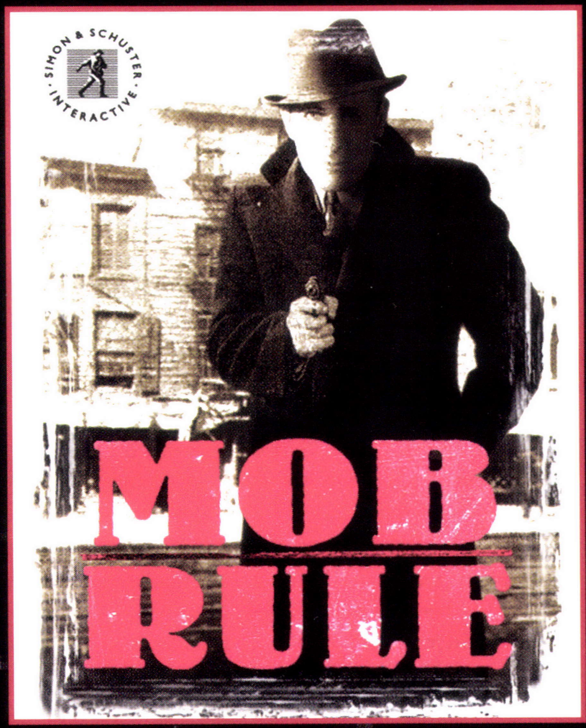
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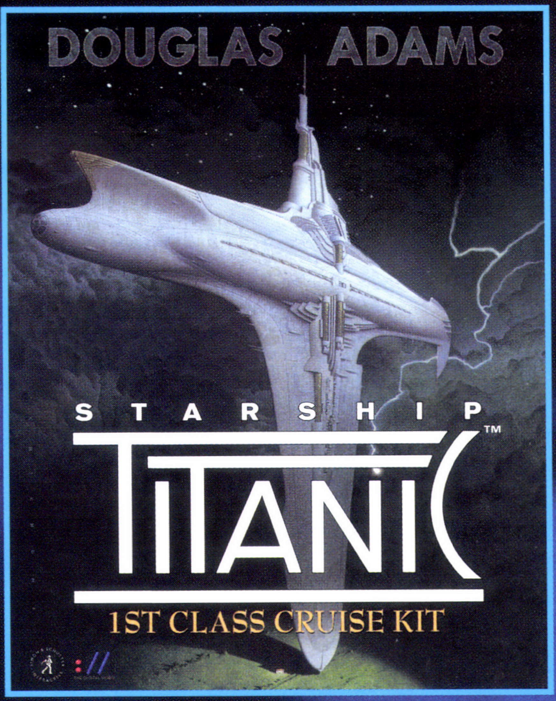
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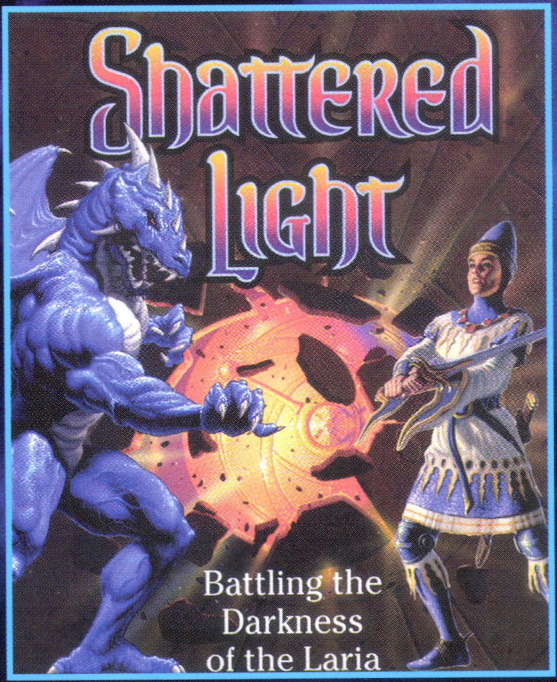
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Industry Insiders Bullish on Growth

Current figures for 1999 indicate another year in the upswing

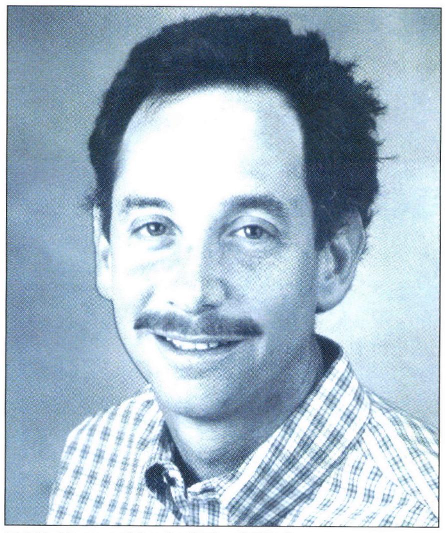
By Steve Traiman

The total videogame sector—including Sony, Nintendo and Sega hardware, software and accessories—is projected to hit $7 billion. This would be a 13% gain from the $6.2 billion reported for 1998, according to Ed Roth, president of The NPD Group. For software alone, mostly next generation Sony PlayStation (PSX), Nintendo 64 (N64) and Game Boy Color, and the new Sega Dreamcast, the console market should be up by 15 to 20% in units for the full year, based on first quarter reports of a 25% rise. Last year, NPD reported total units hit 93 million, worth $3.3 billion at retail.

Doug Lowenstein, president of the Interactive Digital Software Assn. (IDSA), is even more bullish. "Based on a recent survey of our member CEOs [representing 85% of industry sales], the consensus is for a 15 to 25% gain in dollar value with a rather vocal minority seeing a rise of 30% or more," he says. According to NPD, first quarter videogame software dollars were up by about 14%. This reflects the new hits and the continuing popularity of not only the value-priced PSX "Greatest Hits" and N64 "Player's Choice" titles, but also a growing number of "re-manufactured" and re-priced older titles from many leading publishers, including EA, Activision and Eidos, among others.

The Nintendo Game Boy Color phenomenon literally exploded in March, with NPD TRST figures showing sales of 400,000 hardware units and 1.4 million software games sparked by the *Pokemon* series. The total portable software market was 10.4 million units last year, worth $232 million at retail. "Our sense is that the portable market will show increased durability and strength through the year," Lowenstein observes. Big first quarter sellers for N64 were *Zelda*, *Mario Party* and *GoldenEye 007*, one of the top Player's Choice titles, NPD's Roth reports. On PSX, top hits included Sony's *Syphon Filter*, Konami's *Silent Hill*, 3DO's *Army Men 3D* and Hasbro's *Frogger*.

"The Dreamcast launch in the fourth quarter should have a positive, incremental effect if the Sega promises come true," Roth says. "With two very successful machines [PSX and N64] in 28 million U.S. homes, you need compelling reasons for buying a new console." IDSA's Lowenstein has a slightly different view of Dreamcast's potential impact in the holiday quarter. "In a general sense, any new hardware introduction, backed by the kind of marketing program promised by Sega, brings more attention to gaming, more new people into the market and stimulates sales across the whole industry," he says.


Ed Roth, president of The NPD Group

Speaking for Sega of America, president and COO Bernard Stolar reports that the company's first "retail summit" held in early April was a big success. "We had more than 100 key representatives from every industry retail channel including Toys'R'Us, Kay-Bee, Electronics Boutique, Babbage's Etc. and Target, among others," he notes. Retailers already have taken more than 30,000 pre-orders for the system, with Sega predicting over 200,000 by the launch. "We've committed $100 million to a multi-faceted marketing campaign from the September launch in the U.S. through March 2000," he adds. "The Dreamcast console will be $199, first under $200 for any new videogame system, and software will be $39 and $49." The advanced 128-bit "architecture" is claimed as the most powerful videogame console ever created, 15 times that of the current Sony PSX, and 10 times that of N64. It is the first to utilize hand-held gaming through its visual memory unit and first to offer Internet capability for online multiplayer gaming.

(continued on page 24)

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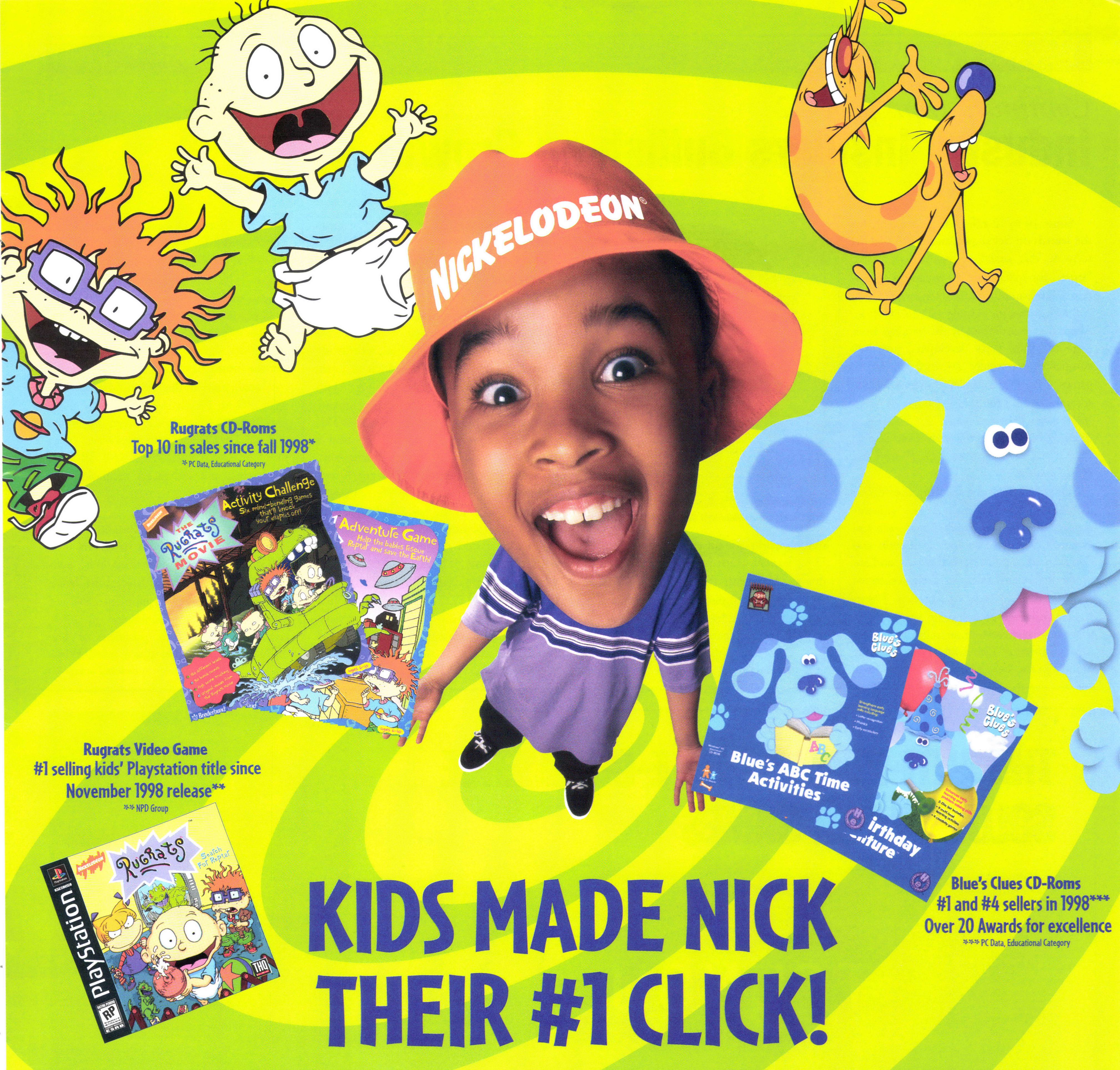
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Nick-O-Matic Design Factory, PC CD-Rom
Nick Brain Bender Activity Challenge, PC CD-Rom
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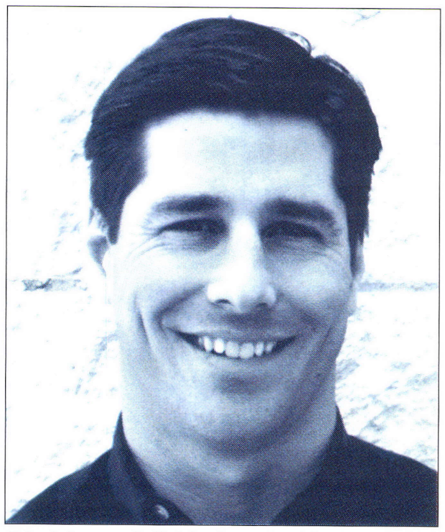
Continued from page 22

Industry Insiders Bullish on Growth

Some 10 to 12 titles will be available for the launch on Sega's proprietary GD-ROM software that offers 1 Gigabyte of usable "space" for special effects, enhanced animation and full-motion video, compared to only 650 Megabytes for existing CD-ROM disks. About 30 are promised by the holidays from Sega and third party developers, with 100 companies reportedly at work on future games, according to Stolar. Previewed at the summit were such Sega games as *Sonic Adventure*, *Virtua Fighter 3*, *SuperSpeed Racing*, *Geist Force*, *House of the Dead 2*, *Sega Rally 2* and working titles *NFL Football* and *NBA Basketball*.

Third party support for the debut includes Capcom's *Power Stone*, Midway's *Ready 2 Rumble*, Konami's *Castelvania* and Namco's *Soul Caliber*. Both Nintendo and Sony are off to good starts this year, and are predicting record sales for their respective systems. At Nintendo of America, Perrin Kaplan, director of corporate communications, reports three-million units of *Legend of Zelda: Ocarina of Time* sold in the first four months in the U.S. through March and six-million worldwide for about $300 million ($ U.S.) at retail. With *Star Wars Episode I Racer* due in May with the movie release, and *Donkey Kong* promised for the holidays, a jump of 30% to 36 million N64 games is forecast for this year, plus 12 million Game Boy Color cartridges. With no formal announcement of the next generation Nintendo system, at a recent European forum there was serious talk about a shift to CD and/or DVD-ROM from cartridges for the upcoming 128-bit platform.



Eric Johnson, Activision's senior VP of marketing

At Sony Computer Entertainment, Phil Harrison, vice president, third party relations and R&D, notes that 50 million PSX consoles have been installed worldwide since the December 1994 launch in Japan and the September 1995 U.S. debut. "With first quarter demand continuing strong, we're approaching 200 million CD-ROMs produced at our U.S. plants," he told a recent International Recording Media Assn. audience. Just back from Japan and Sony's technical announcement for PlayStation 2, due in the U.S. in the fall of 2000, he provided some exciting highlights. "It will be the world's fastest graphics chip combined with a first-time 128-bit CPU built on an advanced silicon base," he explains. "The hybrid CD and DVD-ROM will be the first backward-compatible videogame system that will play existing PSX CD-ROM games, the new CD-audio titles and new PlayStation 2 DVD-ROM games."

With both Dreamcast and Sony's PlayStation 2 having built-in Internet links for online gaming, Lowenstein looks to the future. "The story on Internet gaming in the console market is yet to be written," he says. "There's obviously potential for a growing number of gamers to regard access to online play as an important value-added feature." For the future, Sega's Stolar sees 2001 as the real challenge in the videogame marketplace. "With PlayStation 2 for Sony and a promised 128-bit system from Nintendo joining Dreamcast," he observes, "with three advanced platforms, we'll all have interesting and enhanced technology to offer gamers."

PC OUTLOOK—LEISURE GAMES SEE STEADY GROWTH

Leisure software, including kids' edutainment for the PC and Macintosh, had a strong first quarter with units up 25% and dollars ahead 20% compared to 1998, according to Ed Roth, president of The NPD Group that tracks sales at retail. While

(continued on page 77)

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IEMA
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Retailers Coming to E^3 with High Expectations

Buyers hope to find a worthy cache of titles

By Steve Traiman

Ima DeathBringer- I am here.

***Interplay's* Baldur's Gate**

***Electronic Arts'* Knockout Kings**

Basking in the glow of solid first quarter sales for both video and PC games, after a record holiday period, retailers are coming to E^3 with an optimistic outlook for another record year. The Sega Dreamcast launch in September, *Star Wars Episode 1* games on all three platforms later this month, a plethora of budget-priced PC product, and mushrooming portable sales all are positive factors. This sampling of comments from leading retailers in several business channels offers a good snapshot of the game marketplace.

As one of the first dedicated videogame chains, Funcoland started with previously-played merchandise and now has 312 outlets in 28 states, notes Kevin Connelly, vice president of merchandising and distribution. "Business has been strong so far," he says, "with Game Boy Color sales very pleasant and unpredicted. *Zelda* was obviously the big Nintendo 64 hit, and for Sony PlayStation, it was EA's *Knockout Kings*, Eidos' *Tomb Raiders III* and *NFL Game Day*."

The chain added action figures just before the holidays on a limited basis and has been successful with *Tekken*, *Zelda*, *Tomb Raider*, *Duke Nukem* and *Crash Bandicoot*. Peripherals are also strong, with the private label Player's Edge offering RF adapters, AC power supplies, memory cards and rumble packs. The strategy guide area has been expanded as well.

At Electronics Boutique's (EB) 500 stores, Pete Roithmayr, vice president of videogame merchandising, reports a strong first quarter, particularly on budget lines. "It's not only the *PSX Greatest Hits* and *N64 Player's Choice* series, but a growing number of major publishers are offering value-priced, re-manufactured lines." He also notes that "the entire Game Boy Color line just exploded, including accessories." Among top sellers were *Syphon Filter* and *Silent Hill* for PSX and *All Star Baseball* as well as *Zelda* for Nintendo 64.

West Coast Video's (WCV) 250 com-

(continued on page 30)

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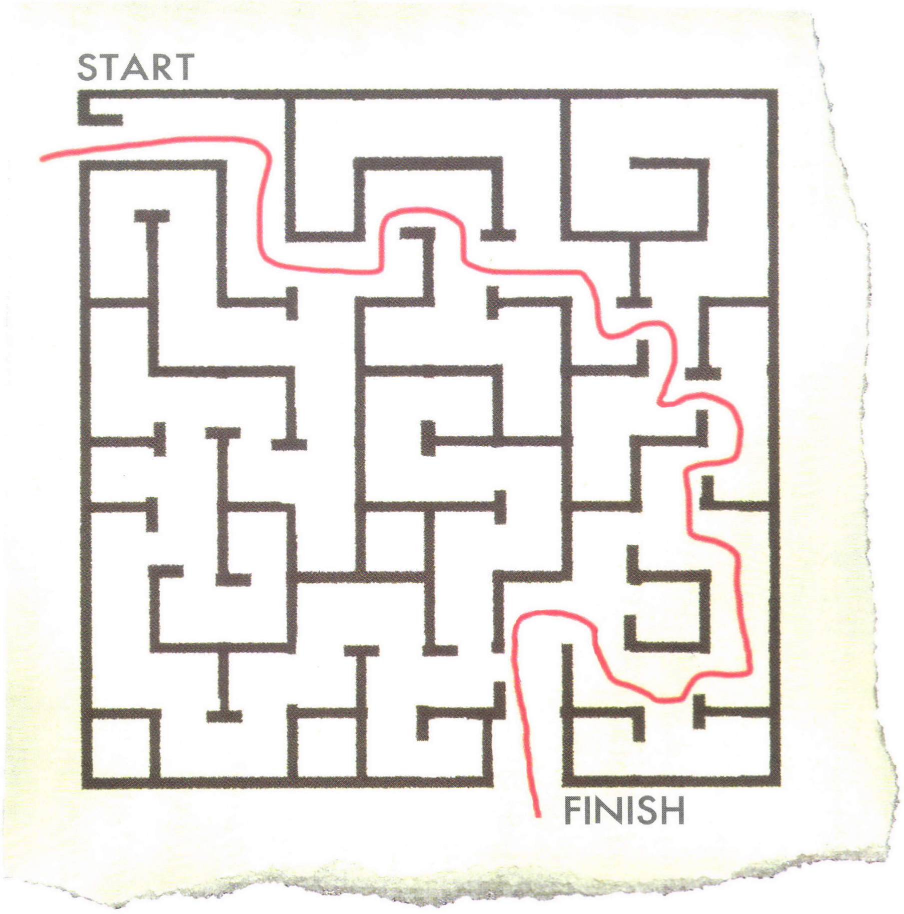

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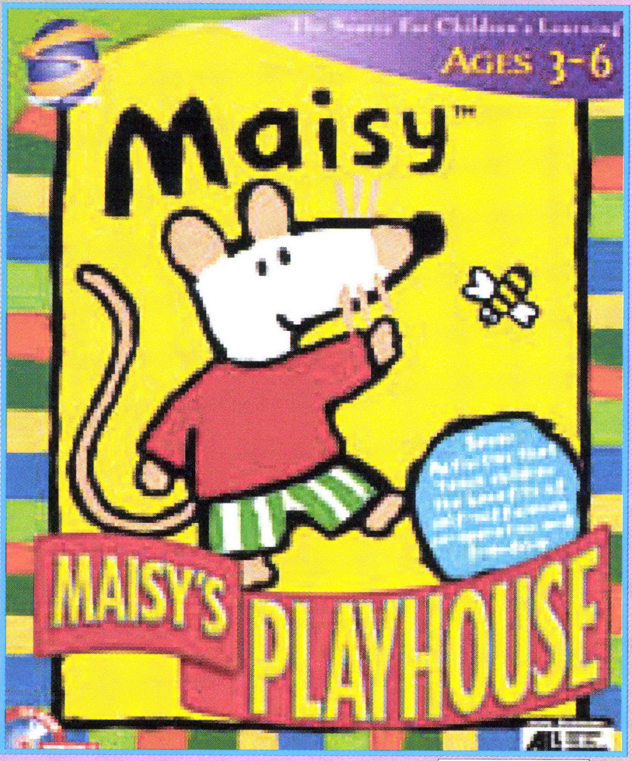
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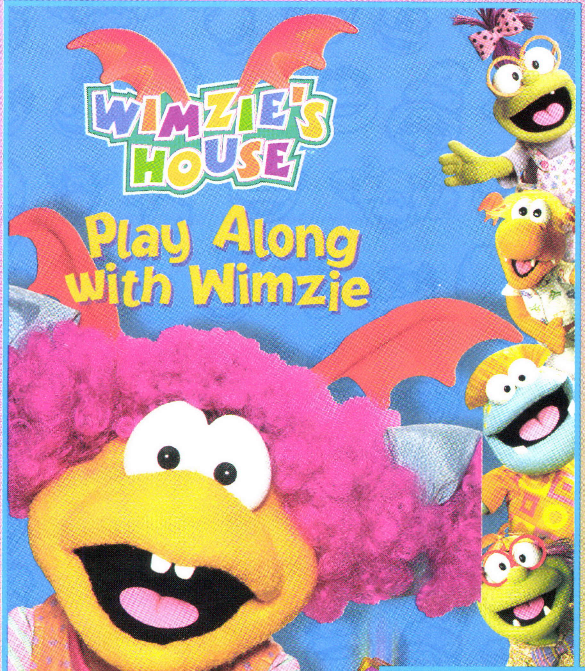
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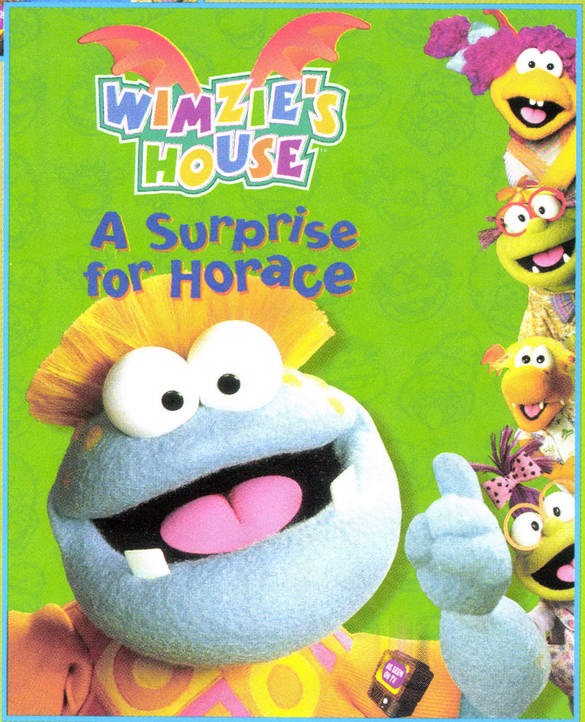
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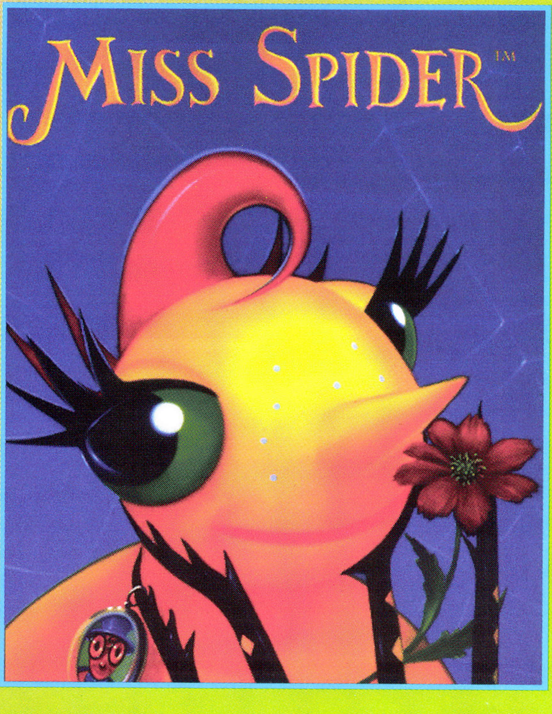
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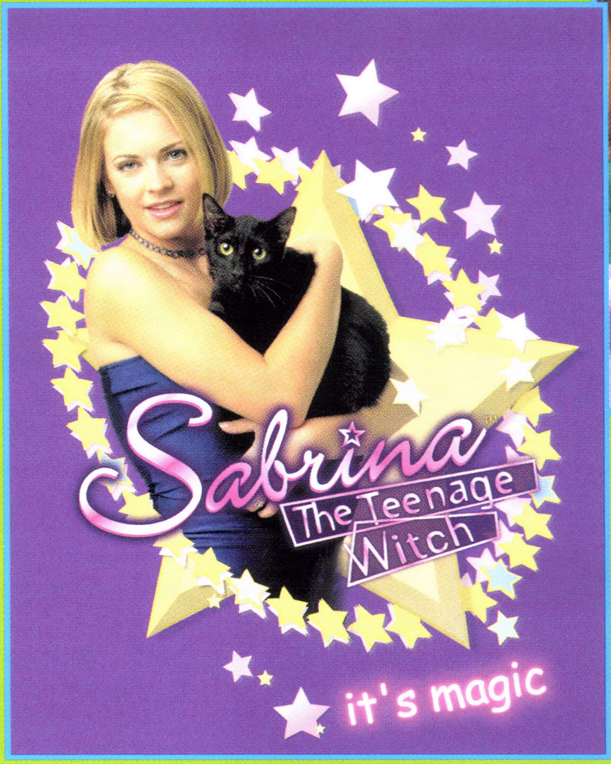
Sabrina
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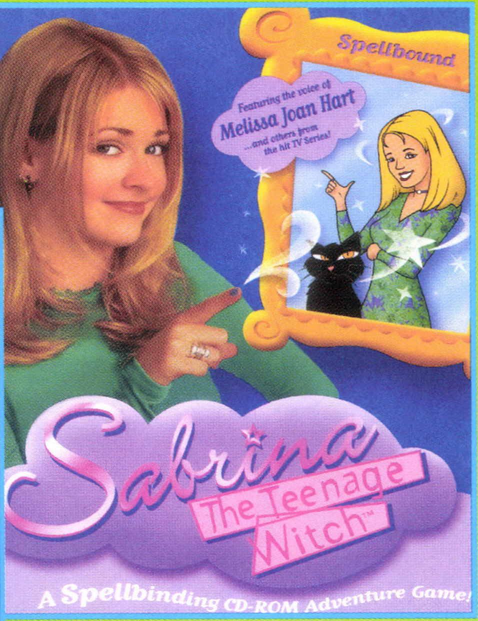
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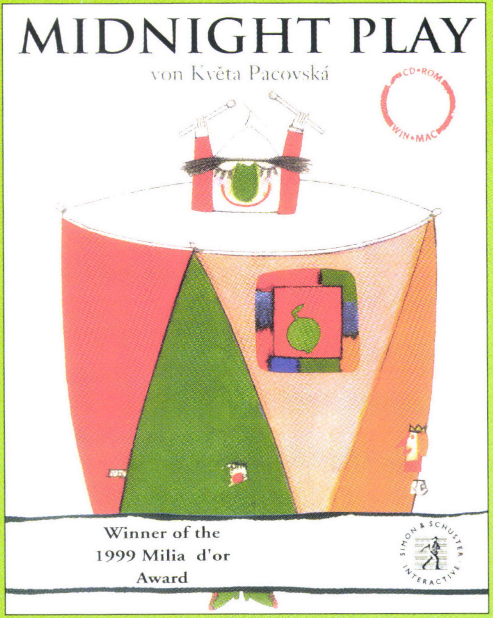
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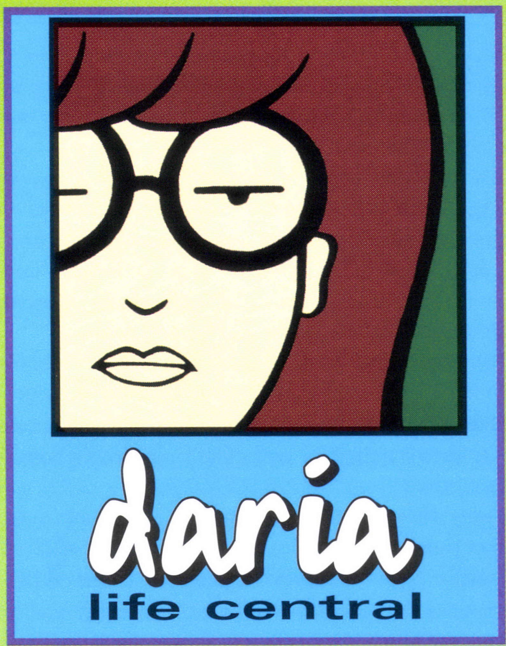
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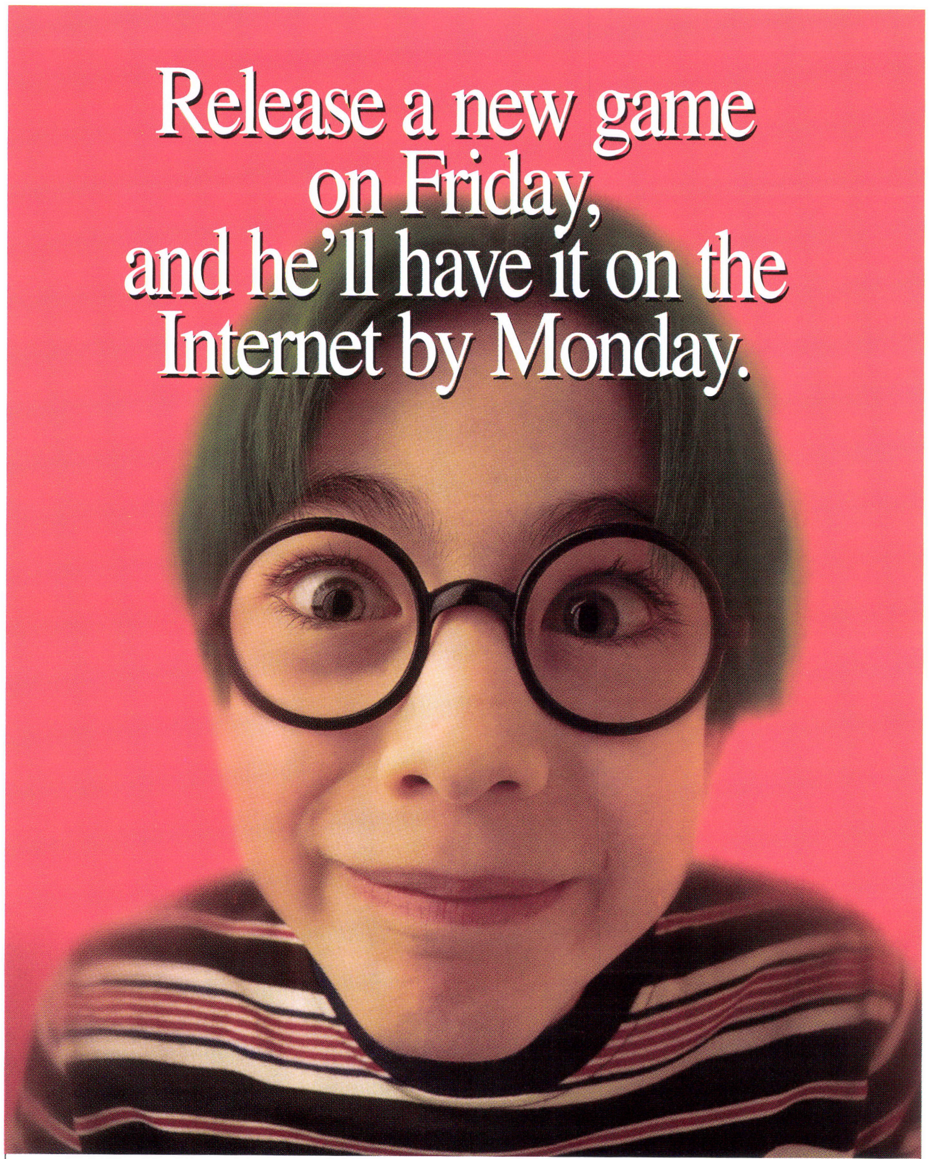
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Continued from page 26

Retailers Coming to E^3 with High Expectations

Knockout Kings: ***King of sales.***

pany-owned stores are taking what corporate development vice president Steven Apple calls "a more aggressive approach to videogames, which we started on rental and now are expanding with sell-through." The chain will be adding Game Boy and Game Boy Color due to customer demand and the *Pokemon* phenomenon "before summer to catch the kids coming out of school," he adds. "We're also expanding accessories on the videogame side."

The Musicland Group's 69 Media Play and 162 On Cue stores "had an overall very strong quarter for both console and PC games," says Scott Burtness, division merchandising manager. On the PC side, he noted *SimCity 3000, Baldur's Gate, Half-Life, Alpha Centauri* and 3DO's *Heroes III*. For console games, hot PSX titles were *Silent Hill* and *Syphon Filter*, while N64 had *Zelda, Mario Party, Castelvania* and Acclaim's *South Park*. "Color Game Boy and both Pokemon titles continue to sell out," he adds.

Those attending the Sega Dreamcast "retail summit" in early April came away very impressed with the new system. "We're excited about Dreamcast and committed to the program," says Funcoland's Connelly. "If they achieve their 'milestones' on time and have the quantity of software they previewed, it should be a very successful launch." For EB's Roithmayr, "the summit confirmed that it's for real—the product, people and plans—and it was a very interesting group of all major retailers and rep firms. Early customer demand [for pre-orders] is very encouraging, and we've been able to set up SKUs and place orders for hardware, software and accessories."

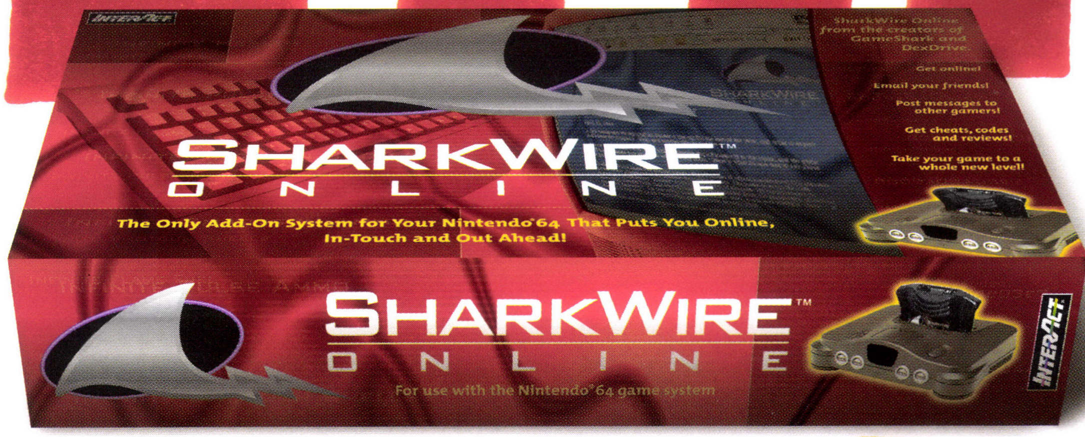
WCV's Apple and Mike Palka, the chain's director of videogame purchasing, have had a Dreamcast to try out for five months and definitely will be part of the launch program. "People are asking about Dreamcast now," Apple says. "If Sega gets the promised marketing behind it, and delivers the initial titles and more for the holidays, it should be a big boost for the whole games market." Musicland's Burtness was particularly impressed with the comprehensive pre- and post-launch marketing campaign. "We're excited about—and committed to—the Dreamcast September launch," he says. "The broad range of promised titles should satisfy the early adopters.

The retailers in this sample had slightly different E^3 agendas. "We'll be excited to see what Nintendo has up its sleeve for its N64 holiday hit," says Funcoland's Connelly, "with the *Donkey Kong* title anticipated as a big winner." For Musicland's Burtness, "E^3 is mainly an opportunity to give publishers a chance to show us their second-half products, so we can put the pieces together for our holiday quarter marketing and merchandising plans."

At WCV, Apple's priority as a major videogame rental chain is to convince both Sony and Nintendo "that revenue sharing is a very viable road to pursue," he says. "We'll explain the solid numbers resulting from the movie studios' adoption of such a plan for movie videos that has delivered a much wider customer base." EB's Roithmayr expects to see one of the biggest shows ever for videogames, and will be taking a more active role with assistant buyer Pat Kuhnell as buyer Sharon Gamble is on maternity leave. "We'll see the 'guts' of the year with new releases and marketing plans," he says. "The incredible Game Boy expansion should continue." **GW**

Everyone is extremely interested in Sony's E^3 preview of PlayStation 2 (PSX 2), due in the U.S. next year. Funcoland owns *Game Informer* magazine, and Connelly notes their editor termed the announcement very exciting and surprising. "The most important factor to us is the backward-compatibility with existing PSX games," he says. At WCV, Apple says, "everyone's already talking about PSX 2 and it's a year away. People want it now." For Musicland's Burtness, "we believe PSX 2's backward-compatibility will give continued life to existing PSX games and eliminate the typical peaks and valleys around most new debuts." EB's Roithmayr is very bullish saying, "I think that everyone who buys a Dreamcast from us will buy a PSX 2 in 2000."

VISIT E3 BOOTH 1400 AND PREVIEW A PRODUCT WITH TEETH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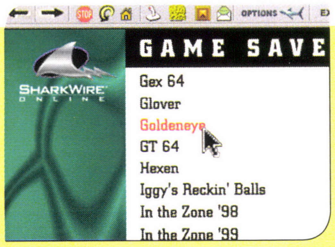
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GAME SAVE

Gex 64
Glover
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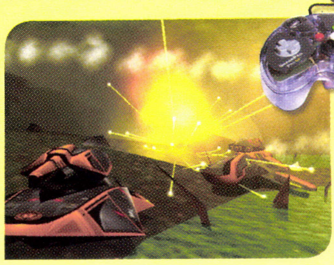
Hexen
Iggy's Reckin' Balls
In the Zone '98
In the Zone '99

Gets gamers online, emailing friends, downloading codes, saves and cheats.



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PlayStation Dreamcast NINTENDO64

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TRADITIONAL MEETS NEW MEDIA

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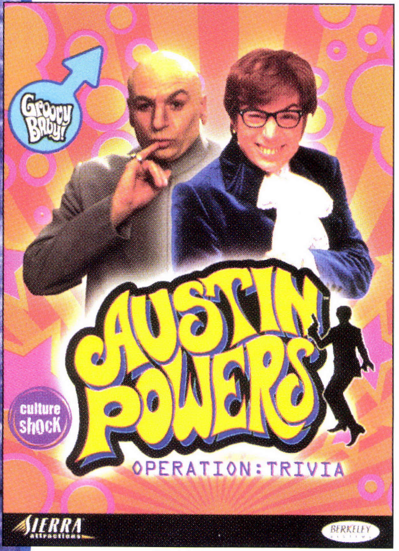
by Karen Jones

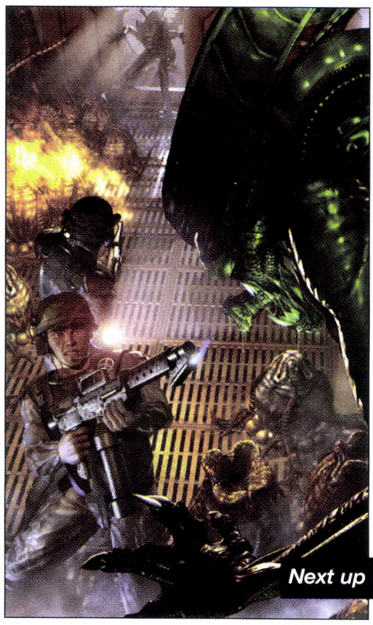
Oh Behave!



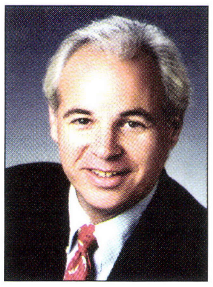
All psychedelic swingers can get ready for a double dose of groovy '60s throw-back Austin Powers, as he returns to the big screen this summer in *Austin Powers: The Spy Who Shagged Me*. The Randy One stars in his first "sock it to me" interactive title, *Austin Powers Operation: Trivia* from Berkeley Systems. Berkeley helped put trivia gaming on the map with the You Don't Know Jack series, and was ready when Powers creator and star **Mike Myers** came calling. Game producer, **Martin Streicher,** tells *HB* that "Mike was involved right from the start, and has approved everything in the game." So what is *Operation: Trivia*? Briefly, Austin has been kidnapped by arch-enemy Dr. Evil, who insists on a game of "*Win, Lose or DIE*", a '60s-'90s shagadelic trivia test with, you guessed it, the fate of the world hanging in the wings, bay-bee. Hey, we just hope they include sharks with frickin' laser beams attached to their heads.

Next Up from Berkeley:* Orc's Revenge of the Ancient, *a fantasy strategy game based on the world of J.R.R. Tolkien's* The Lord of the Rings *trilogy.

Alien Fest



The *Alien* movie franchise (four films and counting) starring **Sigourney Weaver** as Lt. Ripley, the big screen's only female action heroine, is celebrating its 20th anniversary this June, and Fox Interactive will be there with the release of *Aliens vs. Predator*, a hard-core 3D action game. By having access to stellar franchises like *Die Hard*, *Alien* and *The X-Files*, Fox is in a unique position as a "media" company, and it also knows that great gameplay has to merge with popular franchises in just the right way to deliver a hit.



Jon Richmond

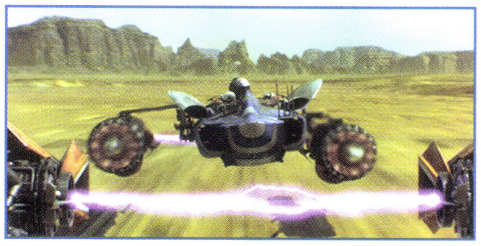
Jon Richmond, President of Fox Interactive, tells *HB*, "*Our upcoming hard-core PC game,* Aliens vs. Predator, *is a perfect example of marrying popular film properties into a quality gaming experience which will stand on its own. At Fox, we are committed to delivering hit studio properties to the gaming community by leveraging our place within the Fox family.*"

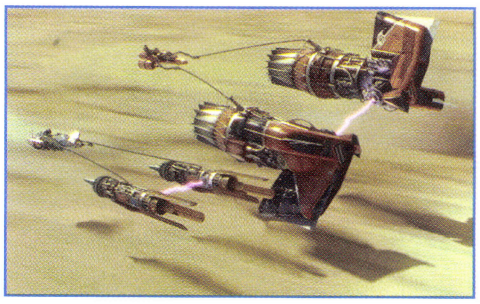
***Next up from Fox:* Die Hard Trilogy 2, Alien Resurrection, Planet of the Apes**

STAR WARS BEGINS

The hype has hit a deafening crescendo, and pundits are laying odds whether **George Lucas**' new *Star Wars* installment, *The Phantom Menace*, will sink *Titanic* as the number one movie of all time. Meanwhile, PC gamers are revving up for the first *Phantom*-inspired titles from LucasArts, *Star Wars: Episode I-The Phantom Menace* and *Star Wars: Episode I-Racer*.

Next up from LucasArts:
Tune in to June's Hollywood Bytes





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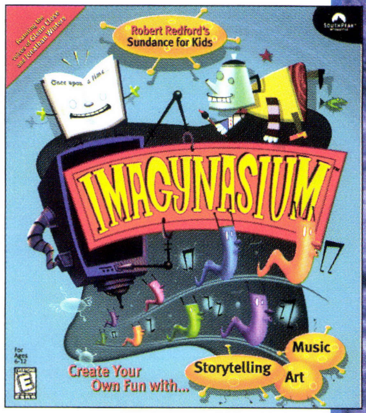
ROBERT REDFORD'S
Interactive Imagynasium

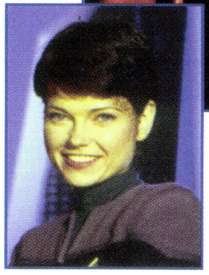
The Sundance Institute has been a haven for creative expression in film-making and the arts for nearly 20 years. Now, through a partnership with SouthPeak Interactive, **Robert Redford**'s celebrated Institute is set to release their first edutainment CD-ROM title, Imagynasium, featuring the voices of **Glenn Close** and **Jonathan Winters**. **Michelle Satter**, director of the Feature Film Program at Sundance, tells *HB* that they have been researching and promoting multimedia for the last five years. She feels that not only is it important to "introduce the film-making community to interactive," but to provide vehicles for children to experience the spirit of artistic exploration and expression. She endorses *Imagynasium* as "a way to promote creative thinking in all aspects of one's life for kids." When asked about Robert Redford's views on interactive entertainment, Satter admits he's "very intrigued" and was involved in all of *Imagynasium*'s key stages, particularly the box design.


Robert Redford's Sundance for Kids
IMAGYNASIUM
Create Your Own Fun with...
Storytelling
Music
Art

***Next Up from Sundance:* Back Stage, a theater activity center, also for children.**

Deep Space Nine Warps Into E^3

Even though the TV series *Star Trek: Deep Space Nine* will be ending its intergalactic adventures this season, Simon & Schuster Interactive, along with GT Interactive, are promising an October launch for *Star Trek Deep Space Nine: the Fallen*, an action/adventure PC game which utilizes the *Unreal* engine. Also, there's a red alert for E^3 Trekkers, as **Peter Binazeski**, publicity manager at Simon & Schuster, tells *HB* that Paramount has provided them with a huge "traveling Trek exhibit" which will be part of their E^3 booth. Even better, **Nicole deBoer**, who plays Ezri Dax, will be on duty at the booth Friday from 11am-12:30pm.



Deep Space Nine*'s* Nicole deBoer *(Ezri Dax) will be appearing at E3.*

***Next Up from Simon & Schuster:* Sabrina II, *sequel to the top selling* Sabrina, The Teenage Witch: Spellbound, *and a new title based on the hit MTV cartoon,* Daria.**

FRONTIERLAND
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Productions

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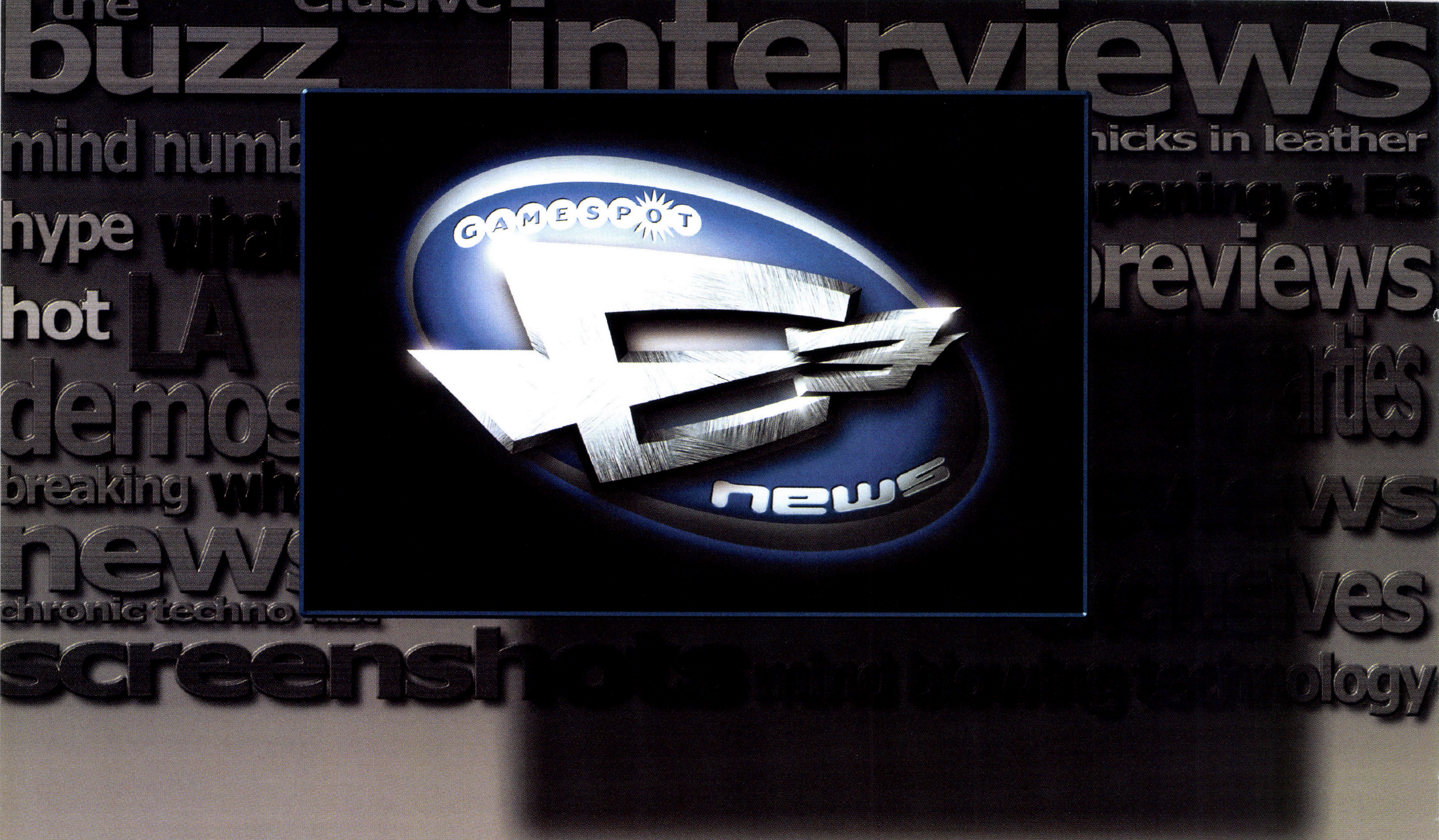
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Send Home the Band

How refocusing party plans can bring your company the right kind of attention

By Erica Kohnke

Maybe we're getting stodgy, or perhaps we're just overdosed on the traditional band-and-booze scene, but the proper way to throw a party for editors has changed. If a PR professional would like editors to walk away from an event with a good story about their company, they absolutely must calm the party scene down.

Only by providing a relaxed atmosphere—filled with key executives from the organizations, spokespeople from the development team, continual live demos, usable press-kit materials, and good food—can PR professionals walk away from a party having done their job well. Otherwise, parties can turn out to be a waste of both a company's money and the editors' time.

PR professionals have thrown some bad parties in recent years.

"I've been locked inside a rap concert (sponsored by a software publisher) that was louder than a 747," says Steven Kent, a high-profile technology freelancer based in Seattle, "The only thing to drink was booze, and all of us editors ran out as soon as we could, catching cabs because we couldn't wait long enough for the first bus."

Steve Bauman, Editor of Computer Games Strategy Plus, says that this type of party is ill-conceived: "If the purpose is to get stories moving in a editor's head—a giant loud band is not the way to go."

Only by focusing on the story, in an environment where the message will be audible, will a party generate ink. Kent says that when parties and events are scripted with demos, it can be well worth his time: "I've walked away from a party, exhausted from a large amount of pure information, saying, 'You've made my life great!'"

So for the first time, PR professionals are being asked to strike a balance between the dry press conference format and the overblown party. They are now asked to create an atmosphere that engenders interviews, product demos, and the obligatory shmooze or two.

"The press wants to know that they'll be fed and taken care of in a comfortable setting," says John Davis, president of JP Davis and Company, an organization which produces trade show press receptions, such as Silicon Northwest at COMDEX and Home Media at E^3, "At our receptions, they see a number of products, they talk to the right people who tell them what they really need to know to write a story—you don't get that at a big image-generating type of press party."

In other words, if you want to generate ink about your company from the party, forget the band, and get out the cocktail shrimp.

But don't get carried away. "You don't need to be extravagant to make an impression," says Jeff Young, a Portland-based technology freelancer for *USA Today* and *The Oregonian*. "The most important reason for me to go to a party is to see new products and get hands-on demos."

When you have the format right (did I mention shrimp?), and editors find that your parties are worth the time to attend, then your guest list will automatically grow. In the meantime, you can boost the press attendance by being clear with editors about what story they will walk away with at the end, what new products they will see, and the names of executives who will be in attendance.

"The only way I'll go to a party is if there's serious product time involved," says Bauman, "I usually ask how much of an event will be focused on product and how much on party, and if it's too slanted toward the party, I usually bow out."

Steve Kent also makes sure an event will result in several stories before he accepts: "When I know that my readers are going to get something worthwhile out of my attendance, then I'll go."

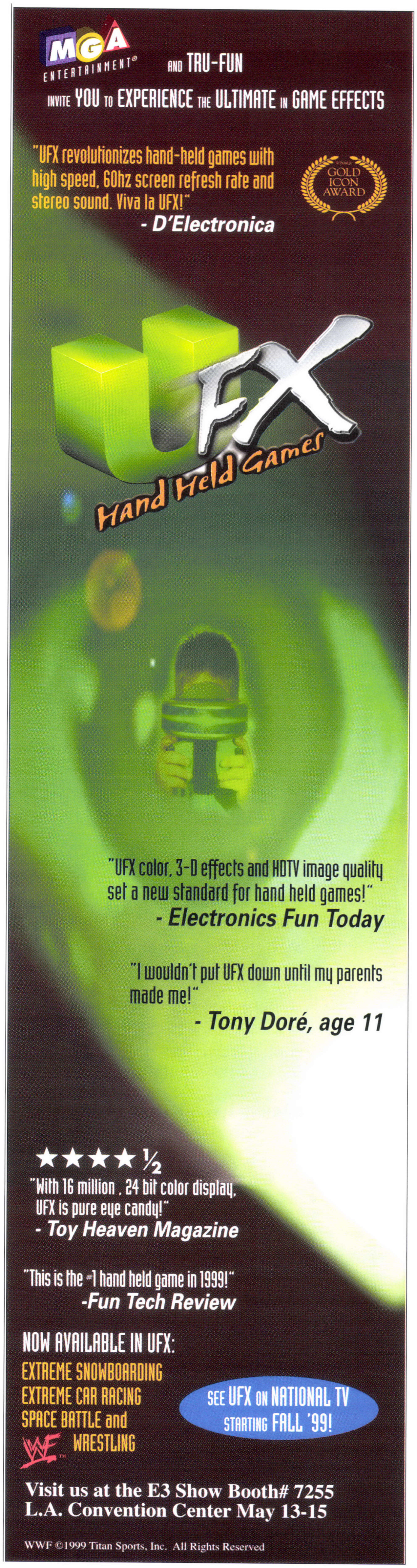
These tips are also helpful as you prepare to throw the perfect, newsworthy party:

- Smile and dial. Often, printed or e-mailed invitations get lost in the massive shuffle of information on an editor's desk, so it's a good idea to personally invite every person on your list.
- Start early. Like press tours, the earlier you begin the invitation process, the more likely you are to get a real commitment from an editor. A month before the event is not too early to call.
- Spread out at the party. Never allow the representatives from your company to cluster in one corner. Introduce the heck out of everyone, and keep the executives speaking to journalists.
- Keep it mellow. The more stressful the trade show, the more important a pleasant atmosphere becomes. John Davis says that as the day wears on at E^3 and COMDEX, people begin to anticipate the comfort of a sedate cocktail party more than additional flashing lights and music.
- Be the early bird. Most folks are tired after a long day editing or walking the show floor. The best press receptions overlap the end of the work day.
- Don't go it alone. The more news you can offer the press, the better—sometimes partnering with your PR compatriots in other companies creates a better draw for editors. You can either arrange these "parties-in-partnership" yourself or hire a media reception company to handle the details.

Press receptions and targeted parties can be a terrific, cost-effective way to introduce your VIP's to the media, demonstrate new products, and generate excitement surrounding your company. They simply need to be more carefully orchestrated than they have been in the past.

So fire the band, throw parties that matter, and greet the editors at the door with a story and a smile. Every time. **GW**

Erica Kohnke is the vice president of Linn Public Relations, an agency focused specifically on interactive entertainment titles. She lives and works in San Francisco, CA.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Mass Market Versus Mainstream

Is the mainstream gamer bad for the hardcore business?

By Paul Palumbo

There was a lot of talk at this year's Game Developers Conference (GDC) about the "negative" impact on the hardcore side of the business because the industry has so quickly expanded its product appeal into the mainstream gamer camp. The growth of the mainstream segment was blamed by several speakers (and in Q&A session after Q&A session) for everything from reduced sales cycles at retail for console product to downward pressure on console title budgets. That's quite a difference from last year's GDC, when there was still general disbelief—if not shock—at the sell-through success of *Deer Hunter*, and a willing acknowledgment that the industry needed to expand its appeal beyond the hardcore segment post haste.

This year, there appeared to be open disdain for mainstream product from some quarters of the business. That is not true of the major publishers like Electronic Arts or Activision. Those publishers will quietly admit that if they can make a title for $100,000 and sell 100,000 pieces and make "bank," then it's great. These brands encompass a lot of mind-share across any number of market segments. Granted, most of the criticism came from developers who don't particularly rate what was disparagingly referred to as "redneck" categories producing games such as *Deer Hunter* or the "little girls" segment (typified by Barbie products) as high on their list of priorities, or even worthy of their creative attention.

Considering most people at GDC were developers, it's only natural there would be a tendency to dismiss or otherwise downplay the expansion of the business to include production for mainstream audiences.

THERE HAS ALWAYS BEEN A MAINSTREAM

While the industry's roots go back to the days of *Pong*, a low-tech electronic experience that everyone liked, games following in *Pong*'s footsteps (*Asteroids*, *Missile Command* and *Galaxian* et. al.) were not really mainstream games, however, and that's when the industry began to move into a more niche production focus. As the electronic form of gaming migrated toward niche, family-oriented board games continued on their mass-market appeal track. So, there was always a mainstream gamer segment, but it was a matter of delivery.

The electronic medium of delivery has grown (via the PC and Internet)—better consoles, set top boxes, etc.—so, it makes sense there would be an expansion of production to appeal to those modes of playback or distribution. But, artistic sensibilities and production value judgments aside, the question really turns on how much truth is there to the criticisms voiced?

> Publishers can't blindly take any production approach with mainstream product, which could undermine brand equity with core segments of its consumer base.

TOP-TEN SELL-THROUGH STILL STRONG

One of the first statistics to examine is sell-through of top-ten console products. According to forecasts supplied by NPD Group, the top-ten console games sold through some 14.5 million pieces in 1998, versus 13.5 million pieces in 1997. That's a 7.4% gain on raw sell through tonnage (see tables below). That said, there was slight price erosion seen, with an average top ten titles selling for $45.85 in 1998 versus $51.63 in 1997, an 11.1% decline. Is the casual game segment the cause of the drop in retail price points for console product? It's unlikely. What's more likely happening is that the industry is at the high-end of its current sales cycle, and the so-called dismal science of economics has demonstrated time and time again that a drop in price sells more of a particular good in markets that are maturing.

Top Ten Best Selling Video Game Titles

Ranked by Unit Sales—Annual 1997

Rank	Title	Platform	Publisher	Projected Unit range	Avg. retail Price
1	Mario Kart 64	Nintendo 64	Nintendo of America	2.0-2.5 million	$61
2	Super Mario 64	Nintendo 64	Nintendo of America	1.5-2.0 million	$61
3	StarFox 64 W/Rumble Pack	Nintendo 64	Nintendo of America	1.5-2.0 million	$61
4	Diddy Kong Racing	Nintendo 64	Nintendo of America	1.5-2.0 million	$50
5	GoldenEye 007	Nintendo 64	Nintendo of America	1.5-2.0 million	$61
6	Final Fantasy VII	PlayStation	Sony Computer Entertainment	1.0-1.5 million	$51
7	NFL Gameday '98	PlayStation	Sony Computer Entertainment	1.0-1.5 million	$36
8	Madden NFL '98	PlayStation	Electronic Arts	500k-1.0 million	$39
9	Star Wars: Shadow of the Empire	Nintendo 64	Nintendo of America	500k-1.0 million	$70
10	Crash Bandicoot	PlayStation	Sony Computer Entertainment	500k-1.0 million	$27
					Total Avg.: $51.63

Source: NPD TRSTS Video Games Service

Top Ten Best Selling Video Game Titles

Ranked by Unit Sales—Annual 1998

Rank	Title	Platform	Publisher	Projected Unit range	Avg. retail Price
1	GoldenEye 007	Nintendo 64	Nintendo of America	2.0-2.5 million	$49
2	Zelda:Ocarina Time	Nintendo 64	Nintendo of America	2.0-2.5 million	$59
3	Gran Turismo Racing	Playstation	Sony Computer Entertainment	1.0-1.5 million	$41
4	Banjo-Kazooie	Nintendo 64	Nintendo of America	1.0-1.5 million	$50
5	Super Mario 64	Nintendo 64	Nintendo of America	1.0-1.5 million	$41
6	Resident Evil 2	PlayStation	Capcom	1.0-1.5 million	$50
7	WCW/NWO Revenge	Nintendo 64	THQ	1.0-1.5 million	$60
8	WWF Warzone	PlayStation	Acclaim Entertainment	1.0-1.5 million	$42
9	Crash Bandicoot 2	PlayStation	Sony Computer Entertainment	1.0-1.5 million	$25
10	Mario Kart 64	Nintendo 64	Nintendo of America	1.0-1.5 million	$41
					Total Avg.: $45.85

Source: NPD TRSTS Video Games Service

NPD Group did show numbers at GDC that revealed that only two top-ten titles (*Resident Evil* and *Zelda*) held on to the number one position for two consecutive months in 1998. The corresponding figure for 1997 was five titles. Was the more rapid turnover in top-ten titles in 1998 the result of the mainstream gamer encroaching on hardcore territory or market share? Again, it doesn't seem likely. The number of high quality games on the market today is much higher than it was two years ago, and there is simply more herding from hit product to hit product by core gamer audiences. And, the fact is that the number of weeks in the top spot is not nearly as important as cumulative sales.

What can also be said is, that with the emergence of the casual game segment making up as much as 50% of the top selling titles on the PC platform some of the limelight has been siphoned off—if not sell-through sales—from the console segment. And, some developers focused on the core segments chafe at the thought.

PRODUCTION COIN HARDER TO QUANTIFY

Making a correlation between the rise of the mainstream gamer segment and downward pressure on production budgets for console product is more difficult to nail down, since publishers make dozens of decisions every year, and each product rises or falls internally on its own merit. A survey of publishers conducted by this reporter revealed that budgets have been going up as a result of people (i.e., direct labor) costs. Budgets are a function of team size and time in development. The average budgetary range for "core" (hardcore) console product in 1998 (and going into 1999) was between $1.5-$2.0 million/SKU, and rising at the rate of "people" costs, or 7%-8% per year.

However, here are brand issues important to publishers as the industry moves toward mainstream. Publishers can't blindly take any production approach with mainstream product, which could undermine brand equity with core segments of its consumer base.

There may be publishers with solid operating teams that enjoy a growing or traditional success in mainstream segments, and when the company has hit, it shows up on the bottom line. However, publishers in this category might not necessarily be credited with being "videogame" companies. They may not necessarily be thought of as creative studios, and that could be dangerous. It's one thing to pad the bottom line, but everyone has to be concerned with the erosion of brand equity in this business.

Is there a happy medium? Moving forward, even if publishers are putting out high production value games, they still have to be creative about making them appealing to a wider base of player. Sports games are a good example of a genre that attracts both the hardcore and mainstream gamer. EA has been creating one-button controls and designing better tutorials to get the gamer engage more quickly. Prior to this year, it was tougher to play *Madden*, unless you were an initiated gamer or an NFL fan. **GW**

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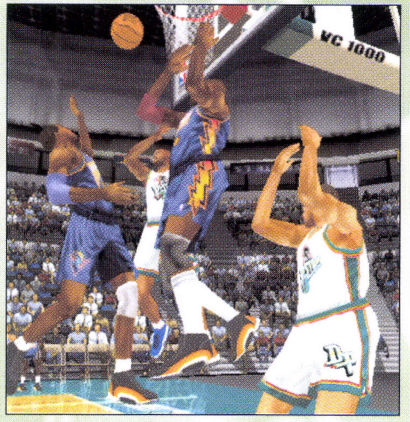
The E3 Expo is about games—lots and lots of games. This week's show will be remembered for the sheer quality and quantity of software. The hottest titles on Earth are all on display from today's biggest and best game companies.

SEGA DREAMCAST

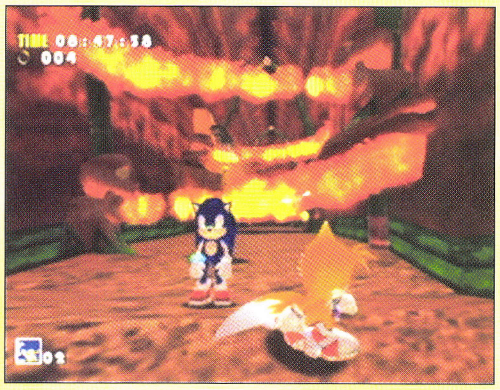
NBA 2000



Publisher: Sega
Developer: Visual Concepts
Available: Fall 1999
Booth #: 2116

NBA action makes its debut on Sega's Dreamcast with *NBA 2000* (working title). This new hoops sim brings home the high-flying action thanks to stunning hi-resolution graphics for an unparalleled level of realism. Players have true-to-life facial emotions, including frowns, smiles, disappointment and even taunting gestures. Some other impressive features include authentic playbooks designed by actual NBA coaches, a multi-player mode which supports up to four players and responsive player control, thanks to Dreamcast's analog controls.

Sonic Adventure

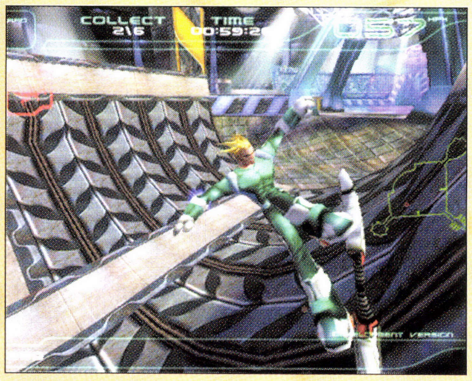


Publisher: Sega of America
Developer: Sega
Available: 9/9/99
Booth #: 2116

The flagship title for Dreamcast is the awe-inspiring 3D adventure game—*Sonic Adventure*. Unquestionably Sega's most important launch title, *Sonic Adventure* will be counted on heavily to be DC's "killer app" capable of moving systems. Striking 3D graphics and original gameplay are sure to "wow" gamers. Being touted as the "fastest game in its genre," *SA* will almost certainly appeal to both hard-core and casual gamers looking for a reason to buy a Dreamcast.

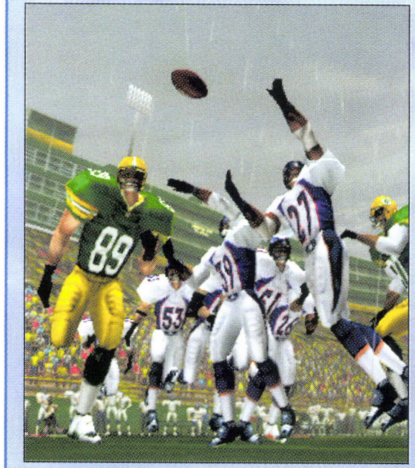
Trick Style

Publisher: Acclaim
Developer: Criterion Studios
Available: September 1999
Booth #: 1100



Developed by U.K.-based Criterion Studios, *Trick Style* is a visually striking futuristic stunt-based racing game that is a cross between *Streak* and *Cool Boarders*. The game allows you select from a number of different gameplay options: including cruising around a stunt-oriented half-pipe to zooming your way through the most impressive environments ever seen in a videogame. *Trick Style* includes many city landscapes for exploration including, LA, Future London, Aerial Tokyo, and Neo-Manhattan.

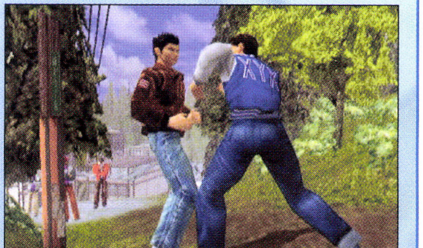
NFL 2000



Publisher: Sega
Developer: Visual Concepts
Available: Fall 1999
Booth #: 2116

NFL 2000 (working title) is the first in a long line of sports games from Sega, as it tries to re-establish its Sega Sports brand. *NFL 2000* features a number of unique gameplay elements that will help make it one of the most anticipated games of the year. Sega promises an intricate collision model that will insure authentic-looking reactions to hits and tackles. There will be a total of 70 teams, plus custom teams. VMU support will allow for discreet play calling.

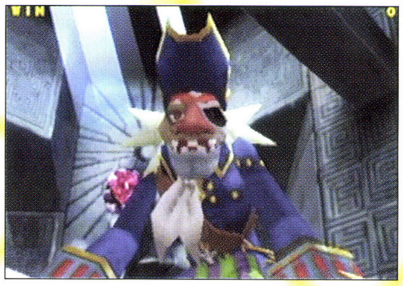
Shenmue



Publisher: Sega
Developer: Sega
Available: Q4 1999
Booth #: 2116

An adventure/RPG of epic proportions, *Shenmue* replicates real-world in the context of a living digital experience. Being designed by famed creator Yu Suzuki, *Shenmue* will incorporate a gigantic world with over 500 characters and more than 1,200 rooms to explore. Each room is unique, according to Suzuki, and you can enter each of them to find items to complete the game. The game also features time control and a changing weather system.

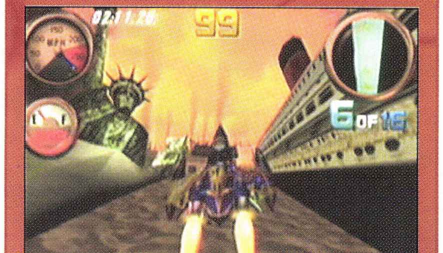
Power Stone



Publisher: Capcom
Developer: Capcom
Available: Fall 1999
Booth #: 424

A mirror-perfect arcade-to-home port of Capcom's latest fighting game, *Power Stone* is a drop-dead gorgeous 3D fighter that utilizes the Dreamcast's advanced graphics processor for superior, hi-resolution eye candy. As is the case with most Capcom fighting games, *Power Stone* excels in the playability department, where Dreamcast's analog control is put to great use. Fighting game fans will not be disappointed.

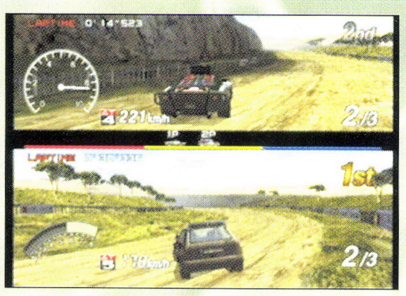
Hydro Thunder



Publisher: Midway
Developer: Midway
Available: Fall 1999
Booth #: 1124

Hydro Thunder is based on the Midway's hit coin-op racer featuring sleek powerboats. This game's claim to fame is the incredibly realistic water effects and furiously fast water racing action. Locations include Lake Powell in Utah, a lost island complete with tropical settings and an exploding volcano, the Arctic Circle, the Greek Islands, Venice, the Far East, and a battleship graveyard. "Dreamcast exclusive" features are also included.

Sega Rally 2

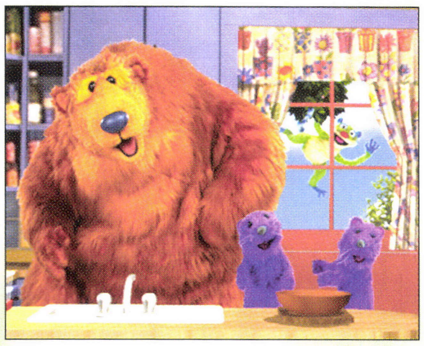


Publisher: Sega
Developer: Genki
Available: Fall 1999
Booth #: 2116

Frame rate problems aside, *Sega Rally 2* is almost a perfect duplicate of its arcade parent. Featuring realistic rally racing physics, *SR 2* is a high-speed addition to a growing DC game library. Race over 16 courses with 19 fully-customizable vehicles. Tires, suspension and steering can be altered to fit the ever-changing road and weather conditions. This one- to two-player racer should become one of the best selling games for the fledgling console.

PC GAMING

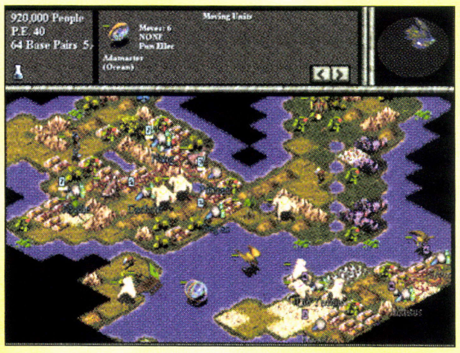
Bear In the Blue House



Publisher: Knowledge Adventure
Developer: Knowledge Adventure
Available: Fall 1999
Booth #: 600

Based on the top-rated preschool show currently airing on the Disney Channel, this product takes kids on an exploration of the warm and friendly Big Blue House to learn about the five senses. Featuring the lovable Bear—the CD-ROM mirrors the simple yet inviting style of this critically acclaimed television show. Through 10 activities, five adventures, storybooks and songs, kids will also learn about problem solving, creativity, caring, sharing, self-awareness and imagination.

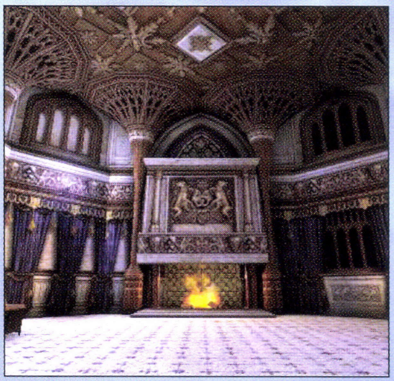
Civ II: Test of Time



Publisher: MicroProse
Developer: MicroProse
Available: August 1999
Booth #: 1146

The *Civilization* line has provided sim fans with some of the most engaging game playing experiences of the last decade. This latest rendition takes the series to the next level, combining improved graphics with new fantasy and sci-fi worlds. The basis of previous *Civ* games—namely, building and overseeing the growth of cultures through micro management of different societal segments—continues to be the foundation here; this time expanded from its Earth roots onto other planets.

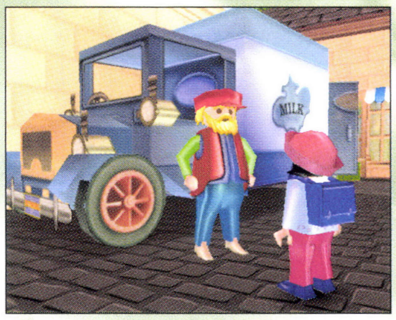
The Wheel of Time



Publisher: GT Interactive
Developer: Legend Entertainment
Available: August 1999
Booth #: 924

Billed as a "prequel" to Robert Jordan's fantasy novels, *The Wheel of Time* is a release with a lot of street buzz that mixes first-person action under Epic's *Unreal* engine with real-time strategy and role-playing components. In addition to a single-player mode that gradually reveals the storyline, *The Wheel of Time* features three variations of multiplayer conflict; playfield diversity due to new capabilities in the level design process; and player skills derived from over 40 attributes.

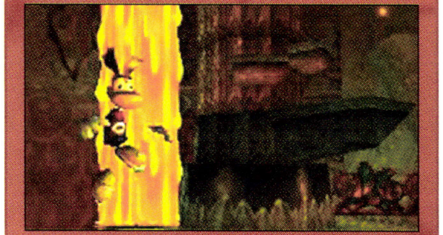
Laura's Happy Adventure



Publisher: Ubi Soft
Developer: Ubi Soft
Available: Now
Booth #: 1346

Ubi Soft describes *Laura's Happy Adventure* as "the first 3D adventure for girls." Based on the Playmobil license, the game stars Laura, who sets out on a quest to unlock the power of an enchanted gem that was found in her grandfather's rock collection. Five missions and over 20 hours of gameplay will keep kids busy exploring their surroundings and interacting with different in-game characters until the very end. Graphically, Ubi has pulled out all the stops as the game showcases colorful 3D environments designed to look and feel like the molded plastic Playmobil universe.

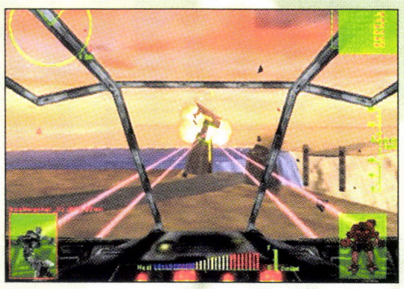
Rayman 2: The Great Escape



Publisher: Ubi Soft
Developer: Ubi Soft
Available: August 1999
Booth #: 1346

Rayman, Ubi Soft's worldwide success that made its start in electronic games (but has expanded into cartoons and other licensed fare), makes the leap into the 3D realm in a colorful, bouncy new adventure. The mission to save his friends—who've been captured by the evil Robot Pirates and placed in an intergalactic zoo—in a quest that'll challenge the gamer. The activity is diverse; Beating *Rayman 2* involves puzzle solving, running, leaping and even waterskiing through arcade-like scenarios.

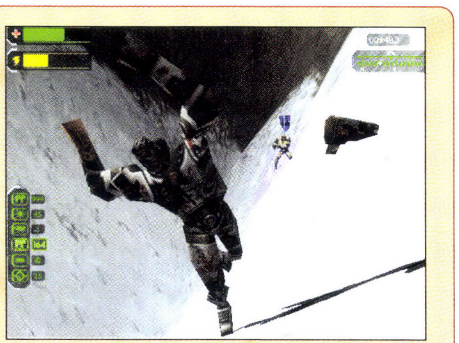
MechWarrior 3



Publisher: Hasbro Interactive
Developer: Zipper Interactive
Available: June 1999
Booth #: 1146

MicroProse brings hungry robot warriors a new chapter in the *MechWarrior* world that provides more than 20 missions, 18 different mech designs and 35 weapons, as well as challenging multiplayer battles. The company also claims that *MechWarrior 3* works well on lower-end systems—down to a Pentium 200 with or without a graphic-accelerator card—which goes against the trend of game designers these days who seem to be catering to the best-equipped gamers with their creations.

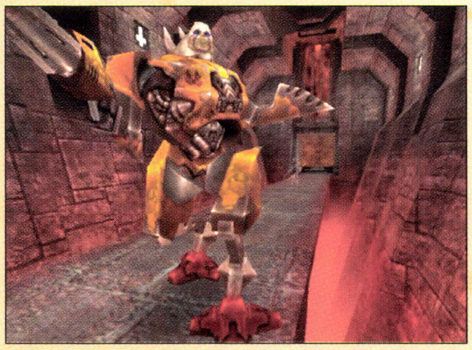
Starsiege Tribes II



Publisher: Dynamix
Developer: Dynamix
Available: Q3 1999
Booth #: 600

Dynamix continues to build on its growing *Starsiege* universe with a sequel to its popular multiplayer online game. *Starsiege Tribes II* is counting on keeping the ball rolling through the addition of real-time chat; improvements in the game's graphics and animations; an improved user interface and command structure that the company claims will facilitate the creation and execution of team play; and more challenging gameplay through enhanced artificial intelligence.

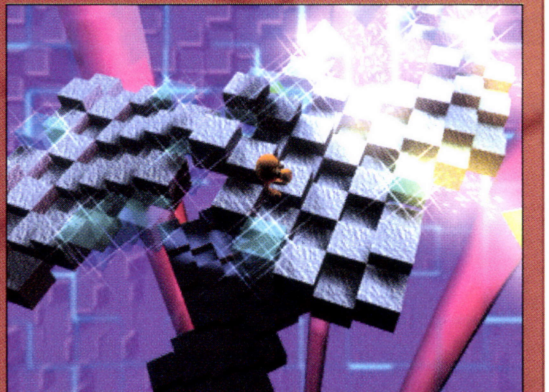
Quake 3 Arena



Publisher: Activision
Developer: id Software
Available: Q3 1999
Booth #: 7221/7227/7215

Activision and id Software are revving up to release the next installment in this incredibly popular first-person-shooter (FPS) series. If the recently released "*Q3Test*" is an early appetizer of what's to come—though id was definitive in stating on the game's official web site that "*Q3Test* is not the game *Quake 3 Arena*"—this latest entry will grab gamers' attention big time. The new version features technological improvements, including more realistic graphics and architecture with curved surfaces (as opposed to the rectangular design of previous game playfields), and a trendy focus on online play. id is also going heavily cross-platform by supporting Windows, Macintosh and Linux operating systems—in fact, the Mac rendition of *Q3Test* was the first out of the gate, with Linux and Windows versions coming shortly thereafter. We're expecting this new Quake to once again set the standard for the next generation of FPS products.

Q*Bert 3D

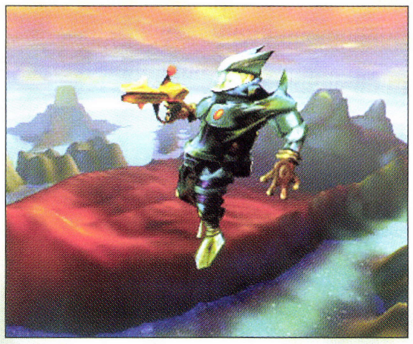


Publisher: Hasbro Interactive
Developer: Hasbro Interactive
Available: Fall 99
Booth #: 1146

The orange fuzz-ball is back! As was first reported in the March 10th issue of *GameWEEK*, Hasbro Interactive has confirmed rumors of an all-new 3D update for an old arcade favorite—Q*Bert. Having secured the license from Sony Signatures, Hasbro will introduce *Q*Bert 3D* for PC and PlayStation in the fall, 1999. This new version will build on the fast, puzzle-solving arcade game that was first introduced in 1982 with additional play levels and new gameplay enhancements. *Q*Bert 3D* has been updated for the nineties to include incredibly sharp and colorful 3D graphics while maintaining the old-style gameplay of jumping from cube to cube to complete pyramids. *Q*Bert's* old enemies are back as well; Coily, Uggs, Wrong-Ways, Slick and Sam are all ready to change block colors, wreak havoc and crush Q*Bert at every opportunity. A puzzle/action game at its core, *Q*Bert* will no doubt appeal to young and old alike.

PC GAMING

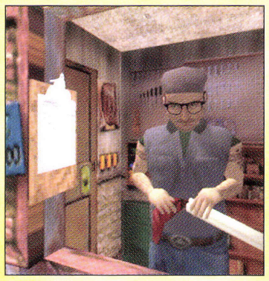
Giants: Citizen Kabuto



Publisher: Interplay Entertainment
Developer: Planet Moon Studios
Available: Summer 1999
Booth #: 5131

Interplay has already received positive buzz for this science-fiction contest via magazine coverage and gamer word-of-mouth. *Giants* centers on a shattered planet and its 30 islands, which make up game's battlefields. It combines 3-D graphics, arcade action, the need for an established strategy and a pinch of comedy to make for durable single-player and multiplayer gaming. The title comes from Planet Moon, the same group that completed *MDK* as members of Shiny Entertainment.

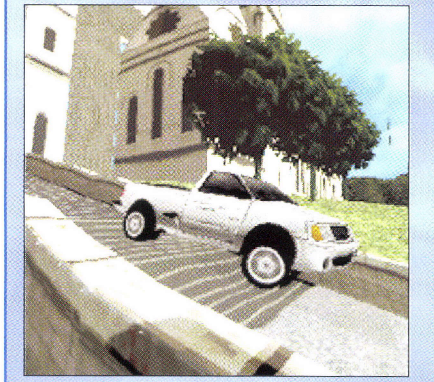
Gabriel Knight III: Blood of the Sacred, Blood of the Damned



Publisher: Sierra Studios
Developer: Sierra Studios
Available: Fall 1999
Booth #: 900

Sierra's new entry in the *Gabriel Knight* adventure series begins in a European village, which provides the setting for the latest tale of intrigue and mystery. Gabriel visits a former prince, but is quickly embroiled in a complex case when the prince's infant son is kidnapped from under Gabriel's careful watch. Together with his assistant Grace, his investigation takes him on a rocky road—and it's up to you to untangle each conundrum along the way toward the crime's ultimate solution.

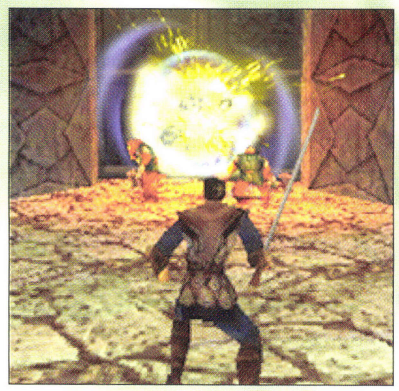
Test Drive 6



Publisher: Accolade
Developer: Pitbull Syndicate
Available: Fall 1999
Booth #: 900

Accolade, which was recently acquired by Infogrames, moves forward with a diverse entry in its action-packed racing franchise. This new spin on the *Test Drive* series benefits from the increasing power of home computers, which enables it to offer more realistic graphics and smoother 3-D rendering. The control aspects have also been improved, which provides less-complicated handling of the vehicle and enables the player to become that much more immersed in the competition.

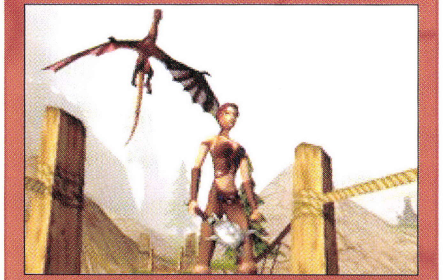
Crusaders of Might and Magic



Publisher: 3DO
Developer: 3DO
Available: Q4 1999
Booth #: 2300

The *Might & Magic* role-playing series progresses with a new entry for computer users (though it'll also make a trip to the PlayStation as well). 3DO and New World Computing promise new levels in action/adventure gaming within a 3-D setting, which comes via numerous interactions with non-player characters. The player is challenged by the game's many creatures as well as through the pursuit for solutions to the Crusaders' many puzzles and quests.

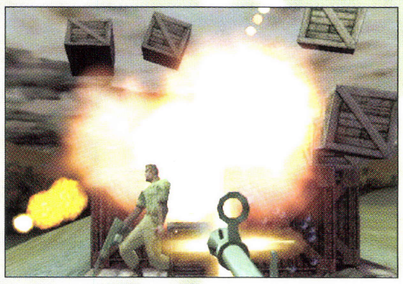
Drakan:
Order of the Flame



Publisher: Psygnosis
Developer: Surreal Software
Available: June 1999
Booth #: 524

Drakan: Order of the Flame is receiving plenty of attention for its gorgeous visuals and intriguing storyline set in a fantasy world. *Drakan* boasts a proprietary 3D engine, which renders vast worlds with no surface or height limit. The game includes hand-to-hand action plus aerial combat ala *Panzer Dragoon*. Players are cast as Rynn, an athletic female warrior who embarks on a quest with a dragon to rescue her kidnapped brother.

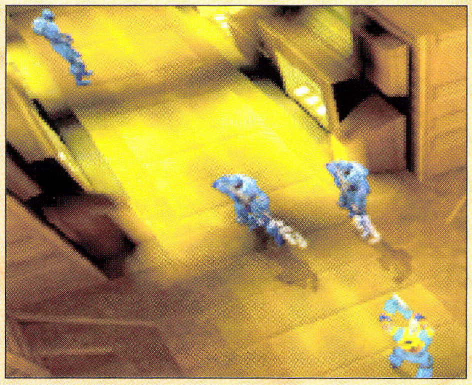
Soldier of Fortune



Publisher: Activision
Developer: Raven Software
Available: Q4 1999
Booth #: 646

Developed by Raven Software, *Soldier of Fortune* works off a magazine tie-in to create a military-themed first-person shooter filled with covert missions and multiplayer action. Loaded up with 30 challenging mission locales–from Iraq to South America to Russia–*SoF* brings realistic battlefield intensity to the computer monitor through the combination of id Software's *Quake II* engine and Raven's GHOUL rendering system.

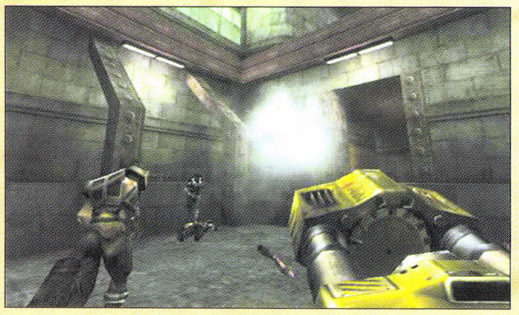
Sanity



Publisher: Monolith
Developer: Monolith
Available: Q4 1999
Booth #: 146

Sanity has a *Scanners*-like theme, in which government agents battle against rogue psychics. The third-person action game features 20 single-player levels and a multiplayer component. Spells can be traded over the Internet, which Monolith claims will work much like the *Magic: The Gathering* card game.

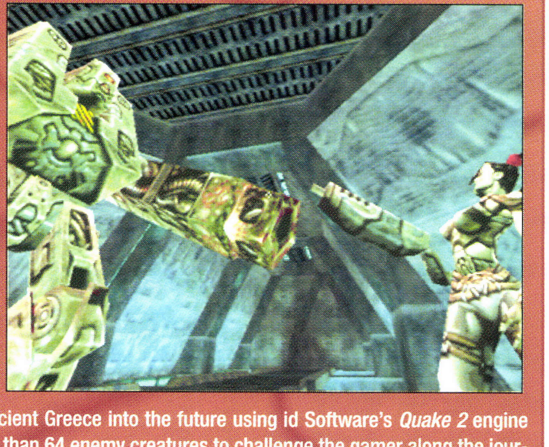
Unreal Tournament



Publisher: GT Interactive
Developer: Epic Games
Available: Summer 1999
Booth #: 924

A pre-release version of this sequel to last year's *Unreal*—a big year-round seller for Epic Games and GT Interactive, even with its post-holiday release—has been drawing crowds at recent events, such as Intel's Pentium III launch press conference and the Game Developer Conference. *Unreal Tournament* (UT) has earned those eyeballs with many refinements over the original. *UT* provides a slew of game options: It offers single-player and multiplayer modes, including a capture-the-flag variation; a "tournament" mode that enables coordinated battles between a number of players; mission-based "assault" sorties; and a fast-paced "hardcore" mode, in which heavy damage and frequent deaths are hard to avoid. It'll be interesting to see if *UT's* focus on competition—similar to the approach taken by *Quake 3 Arena* and myriad other releases this year—will draw a big audience; even the single-player mode involves team play with bots.

Daikatana

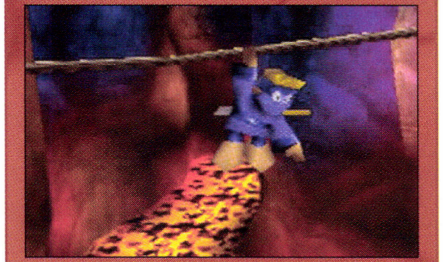


Publisher: Eidos Interactive
Developer: Ion Storm
Available: Q3 1999
Booth #: 500

Little needs to be said about this troubled first-person shooter that, along with Ion Storm, has been at the center of countless news stories. However, it finally looks like it's coming to fruition, on the heels of a recent deathmatch demo and reported increased scrutiny from the Ion Storm's publisher Eidos Interactive. The first-person shooter takes the player–with Hiro Miyamoto being your on-screen persona–through four eras from ancient Greece into the future using id Software's *Quake 2* engine as its foundation. *Daikatana* offers up more than 64 enemy creatures to challenge the gamer along the journey, but also provides 32 different weapons with which to dispatch them. Information is also provided by two computer-controlled "sidekicks" who are equipped with advanced artificial-intelligence and can "talk" to you. Accompanying the action is 33 original audio tracks on the game CD.

NINTENDO 64

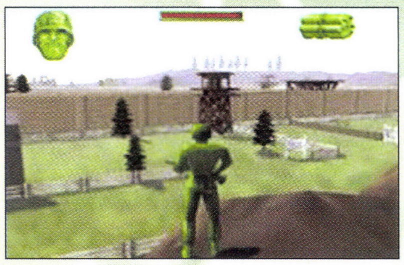
40 Winks



Publisher: GT Interactive
Developer: Eurocom
Available: November 1999
Booth #: 924

From GT Interactive and Eurocom comes *40 Winks*, one of the most visually striking and promising 3D platform games for Nintendo 64. The game's premise revolves around two children, Ruff and his twin sister Tumble. Together they enter the dream world to rescue the 40 remaining Winks from the evil NiteKap and his evil henchmen. Displaying super-detailed textures and impressive light sourcing, *40 Winks* spares very little when it comes to the visuals department.

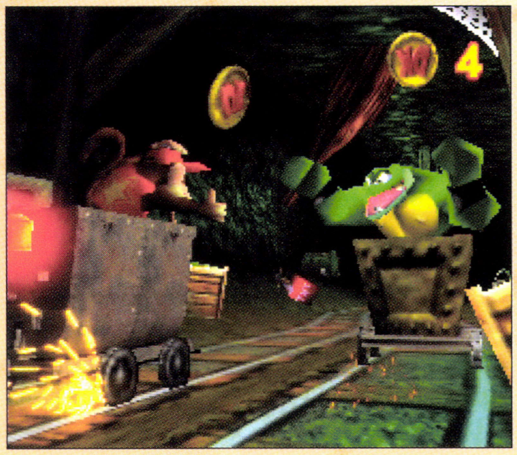
Army Men: Sarge's Heroes



Publisher: 3DO
Developer: 3DO
Available: Q3 1999
Booth #: 2300

Army Men: Sarge's Heroes is a third-person shooter based on the struggle between two age-old rivalries: green and tan army men. You control Sarge, a squad leader in the green army. Other soldiers in your command include Scorch, a disturbed flame thrower man, Hoover, an unsure minesweeper and Shrap, the main mortar man. The evil tan army is led by Plasto, who has found a series of portals that connect the world of plastic army men with the planet Earth.

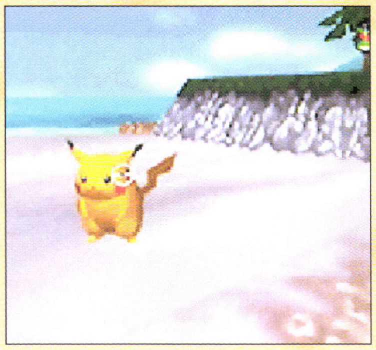
Donkey Kong 64



Publisher: Rare
Developer: Rare
Available: November 1999
Booth #: 2816

Being showcased prominently in Nintendo's Texas-sized booth will be *Donkey Kong 64*, one of the most anticipated new titles of 1999. Those lucky enough to visit Kong's jungle and sample the game will find that Rare has delivered the goods once again. Set in a beautiful 3D world, *Donkey Kong 64* will star Donkey Kong, Diddy and three new characters named Tiny, Chunky and Lanky. The rest of the Kong family also appears, but not as playable characters.

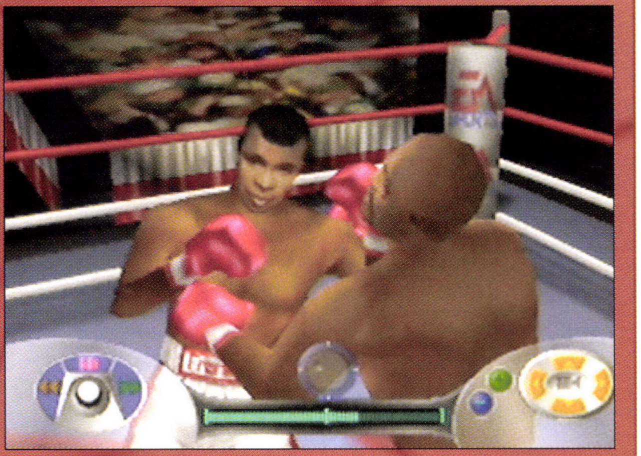
Pokémon Snap



Publisher: Nintendo
Developer: Nintendo
Available: June 1999
Booth #: 2816

With Pokémania sweeping the nation, it was only a matter of time before Nintendo introduced the wildly successful phenomenon to N64. In *Pokémon Snap*, gamers will travel to the fabled shores of Pokémon Island. Their mission is to photograph and catalogue as many wild Pokémon as possible for the publication of Professor Oak's definitive Pokémon encyclopedia. More than 100 Pokémons are waiting to be discovered and photographed by hungry Pokémon fans everywhere.

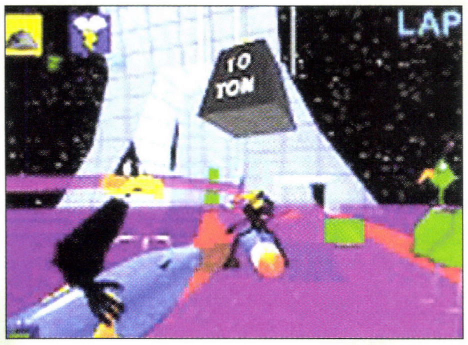
Knockout Kings 2000



Publisher: EA Sports
Developer: EA Sports
Available: Fall 1999
Booth #: 900

The Nintendo 64 gets its first boxing game with EA Sports' *Knockout Kings 2000. Knockout Kings 2000* steps into the ring with many of the great features from last year's PlayStation version, but also adds a few new twists. Over 25 of current and past boxers are included, along with a new feature called the Super Charge punch. When you've built up enough power on a special meter, you can unload on an opponent with devastating results.

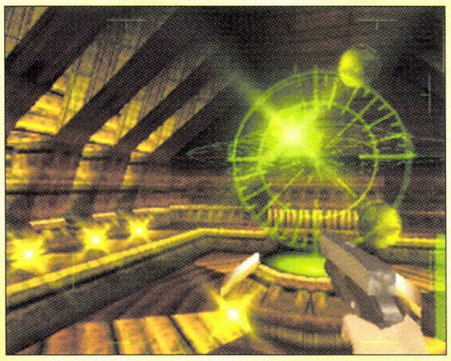
Looney Tunes Space Race



Publisher: Infogrames
Developer: Infogrames
Available: Q3 1999
Booth #: 824

Infogrames is taking full advantage of the Warner Bros. License with not one, but three new N64 WB titles. The first will be *Looney Tunes Space Race*, a hilarious racer starring WB's most popular cartoon characters. Marvin the Martian is racing to recover the scattered pieces of his Explosive Space Modulator, but Bugs, Wile E. Coyote, Daffy and Tweety are also in the hunt. This one to four player game is fun for kids of all ages.

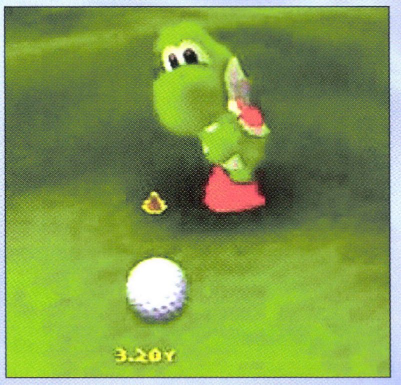
Perfect Dark



Publisher: Rare
Developer: Rare
Available: Q4 1999
Booth #: 2816

One of the most hotly anticipated games for any console, *Perfect Dark* is making its first public appearance at this year's E^{3}. As special agent Joanna Dark, it is your job to infiltrate the evil dataDyne Corporation. With a trail of secrets leading from Chicago skyscrapers to subterranean laboratories, missions are intriguing and varied. Developed by the same team who did the sensational *GoldenEye 007*, *Perfect Dark* is set to revolutionize the first-person shooter genre.

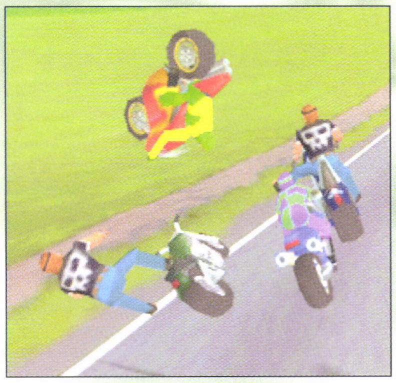
Mario Golf



Publisher: Nintendo of America
Developer: Camelot Software
Available: September 1999
Booth #: 2816

Golf—Mario-style, is making its way to Nintendo 64 this fall. Thanks to a collaborative effort between Nintendo and Camelot (the developers behind *Hot Shots Golf* for PlayStation), gamers will be able to hit the greens as one of ten favorite Nintendo characters. The game features six, 18 hole golf courses and will be 64 GB Pak compatible, meaning you can download characters and scores to the Game Boy Color for on-the-move fun.

Road Rash

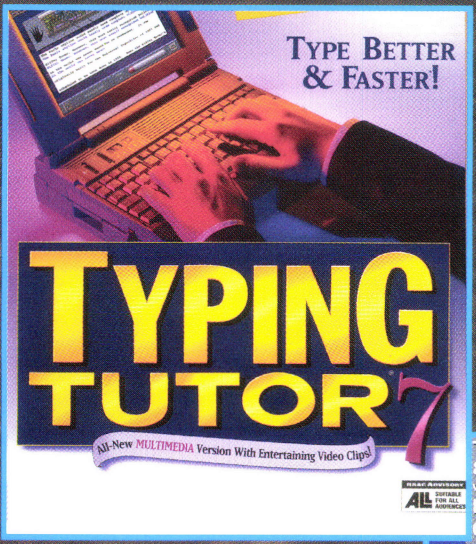


Publisher: THQ
Developer: Pacific Power and Light
Available: September 1999
Booth #: 2608

Motorcycle mayhem hits Nintendo 64 in the form of *Road Rash*. Join a motorcycle gang and take to the highways in search of rival gangs. Thrash it out with pipes, bats, chains or any other weapon you may find along the streets—road rage has never been so much fun. Sporting hi-res graphics, an incredible four-player mode and a ton of hidden secrets, *Road Rash* will make a welcome edition to any N64 library.

SIMON & SCHUS

Publishing for Gene



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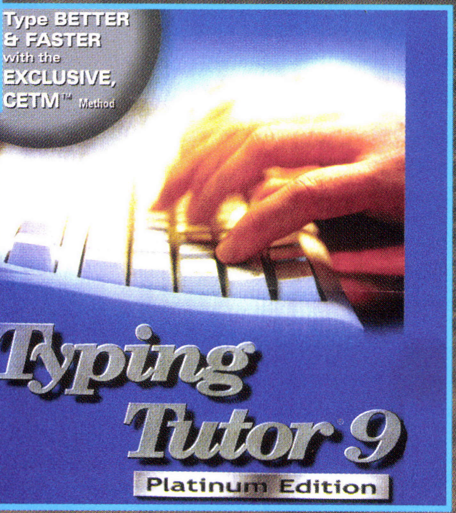

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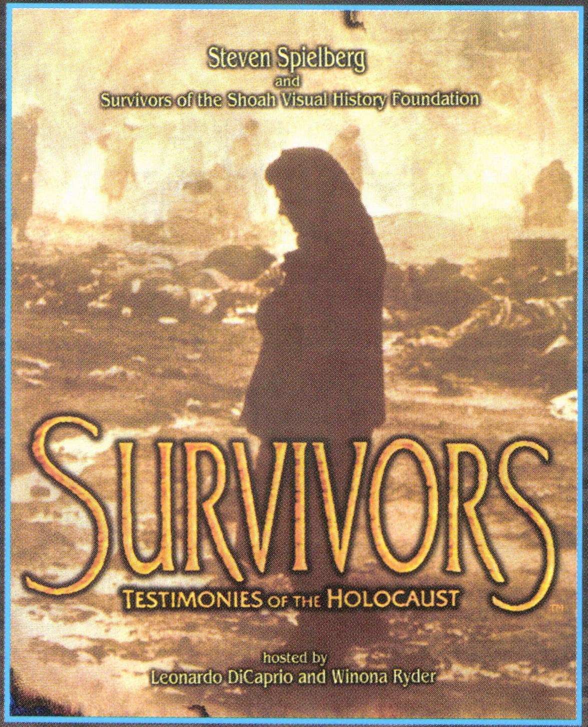

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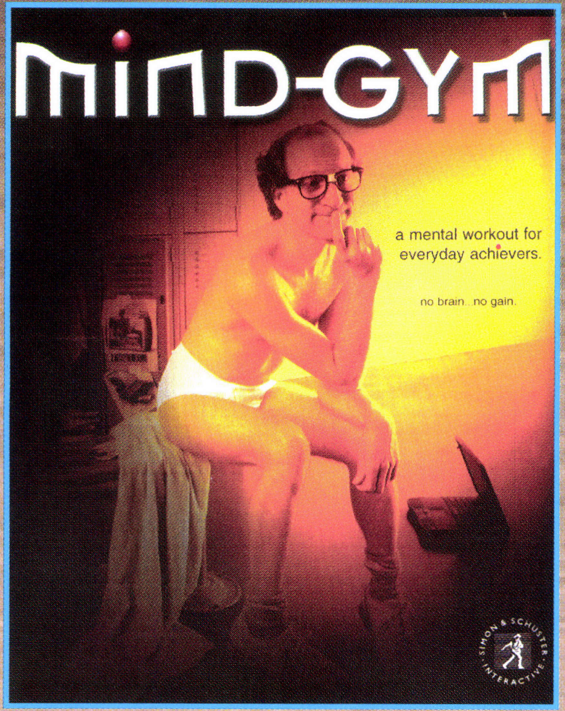

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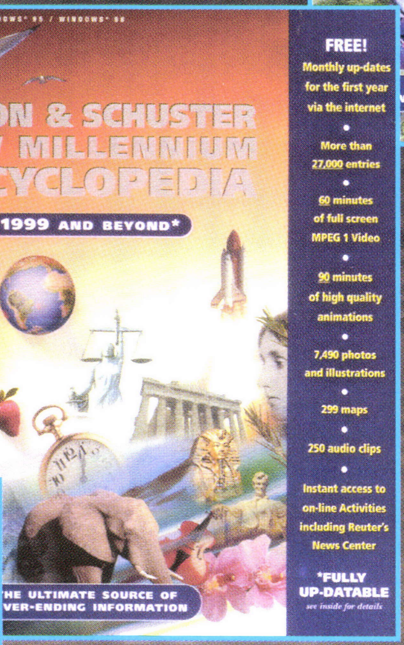
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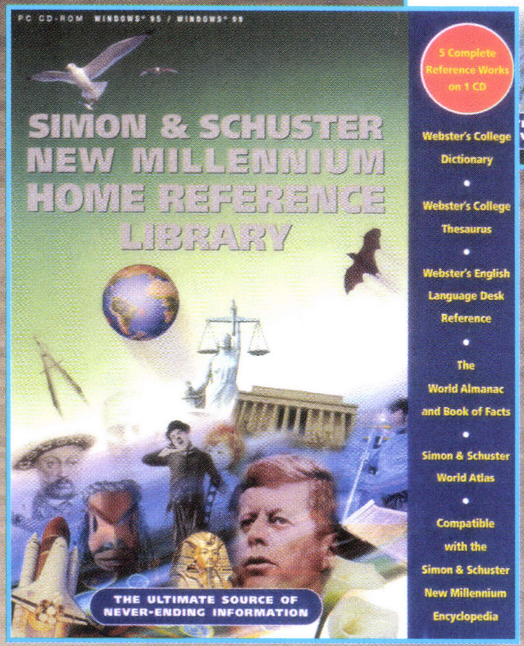
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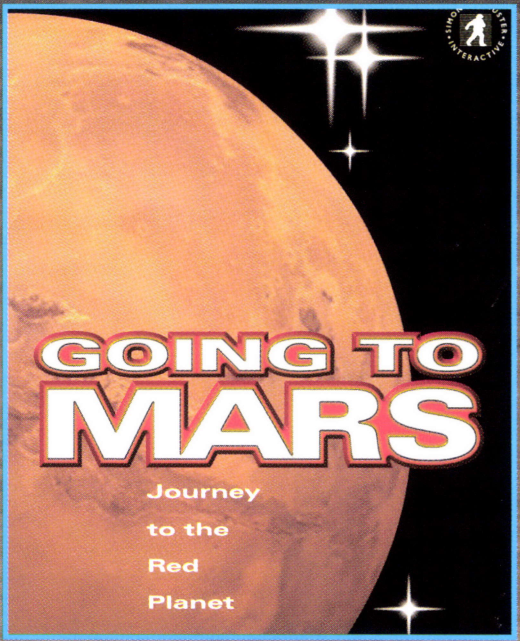
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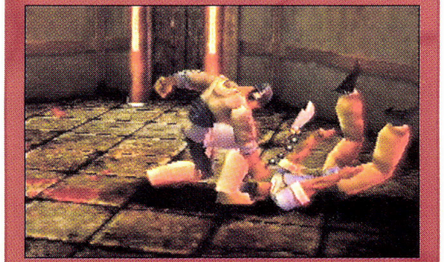
SONY PLAYSTATION

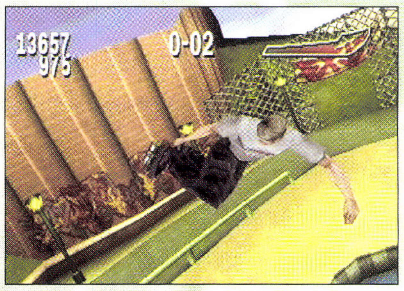
Wu-Tang: Shaolin Style



Publisher: Activision
Developer: Developer T.B.A.
Available: Fall 1999
Booth #: 646

Nope, you're not seeing things; *Wu Tang* is a four-player brawler featuring actual members of one of today's most popular rap groups. In an effort to come out on top, players select from a host of lovable, real-life rappers like Method Man and Dirty Ol' Bastard, then enter fighting arenas not terribly unlike those featured in EA's "may you rest in pieces" *Thrill Kill.* Using kung fu tactics, players attack, block and counter enemies. From Staten Island to China, it's a wild, territorial battle to the death.

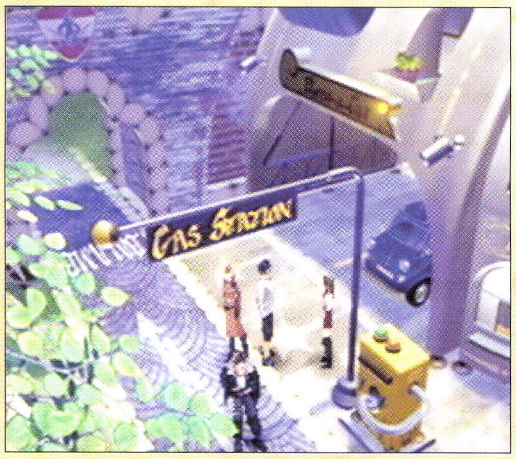
Tony Hawk's Pro Skater



Publisher: Activision
Developer: Neversoft
Available: Fall 1999
Booth #: 646

Activision's entry into skateboarding may very well turn out to be one of the best available for the PlayStation. Neversoft seems to be pulling out all the stops with this one; *Pro Skater* will feature loads of outrageous courses littered with tough-to-reach spots and secret areas. In addition to the Hawkman himself, there are seven other real-world skaters to choose from. "Shred the rad" in Split-Screen, Point, Time Attack and Tag modes.

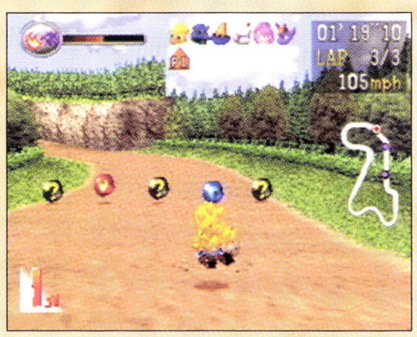
Final Fantasy VIII



Publisher: Square Soft
Developer: Square/EA
Available: September 1999
Booth #: 1506

Final Fantasy VIII is the latest in the multi-million selling RPG series. This new installment combines a mix of action, adventure and romance in a spectacular cinematic experience that only Square could deliver. The main hero includes Squall and his elite team of combatants. The developers also improved the graphics to include detailed characters and environments. Expected to be one of the biggest selling games of the year, *FFVIII* is eagerly awaited by most retailers and gamers alike.

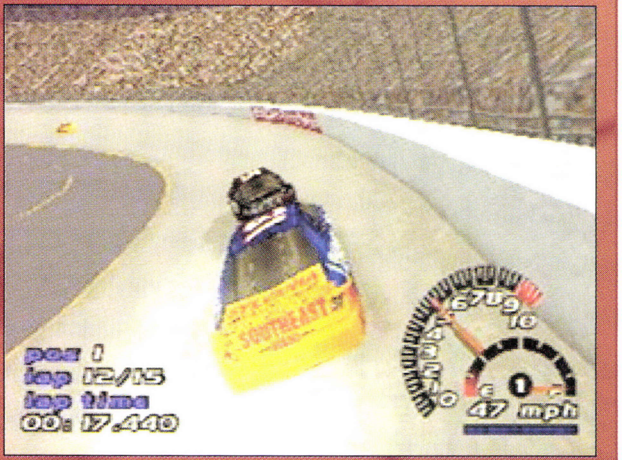
Chocobo Racing



Publisher: Square Soft
Developer: Square/EA
Available: Fall 1999
Booth #: 1506

Chocobo Racing is a kart-style racing game starring the familiar Chocobo character from the *Final Fantasy* franchise. Similar in style and substance to *Mario Kart 64*, *Chocobo Racing* includes five game modes, colorful graphics and fast racing action. In typical Square fashion, players will be able to edit the parameters of their chosen characters at the end of every story mode so that it could be saved on a memory card to use in other game modes.

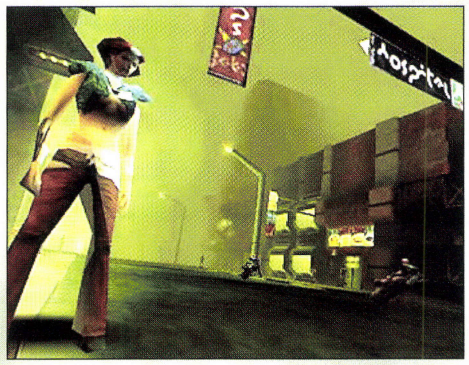
NASCAR 2000



Publisher: EA Sports
Developer: EA Sports
Available: Fall 1999
Booth #: 900

NASCAR racing, America's biggest spectator sport returns to PlayStation for one more round with EA Sports' *NASCAR 2000*. This year's version includes many new features like; all new paint jobs, updated teams and 18 licensed tracks. In addition, fantasy road races have been added for greater variety, plus a create-a-driver mode, motion-captured interactive pit-stops and two-player season option are all new to one of the most popular racing series in the industry.

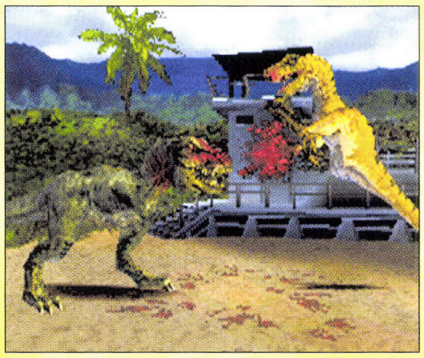
Omikron



Publisher: Eidos
Developer: Eidos
Available: Q4 1999
Booth #: 500

Omikron is a unique action/adventure title. Players will have the ability to play as 50 different characters just by touching them during gameplay. Exploration takes place from a third-person perspective, while shooting occurs in first-person. Also, there is a fighting engine in the game for hand-to-hand combat that allows hi and low punches and kicks, as well as combos. *Omikron* will prove to be a popular game for fans of action/adventure style titles.

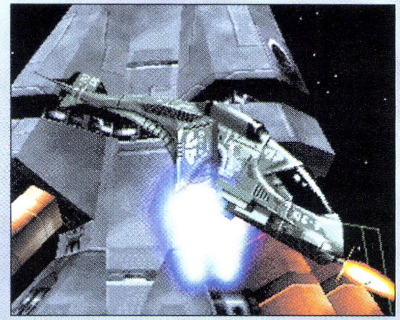
Warpath: Jurassic Park



Publisher: Electronic Arts
Developer: DreamWorks/Black Ops
Available: Fall 1999
Booth #: 309

Dinosaurs are making a come back on PlayStation thanks to a new game called *Warpath: Jurassic Park. Warpath* is all-out hack and slash fighting game starring some of the most savage, bloodthirsty creatures from the Jurassic era. EA promises the following features: Ten dinosaurs; 14 arenas, including Visitor's Center, Helicopter Pad, Embryo Lab, and T-Rex Paddock; "Blood Rage" mode that award players with secret attack moves and Interactive Dinosaur Institute allows players to learn the history for each dinosaur.

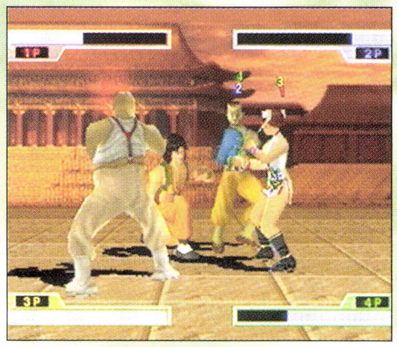
G-Police Weapons of Justice



Publisher: Psygnosis
Developer: Psygnosis
Available: Q3 1999
Booth #: 524

As the sequel to last year's critically acclaimed, *G-Police, Weapons of Justice* improves upon the original in every way. Among the new features are three totally new player vehicles (the Raptor, a mech-style robot, the Corsair, a space-craft and the car); 25 weapons, 35 enemy craft; 30 missions. Psygnosis has improved the visuals to include sharper graphics and improved lighting routines for more convincing environments like underground tunnels, canyons and gritty city streets.

Shao Lin

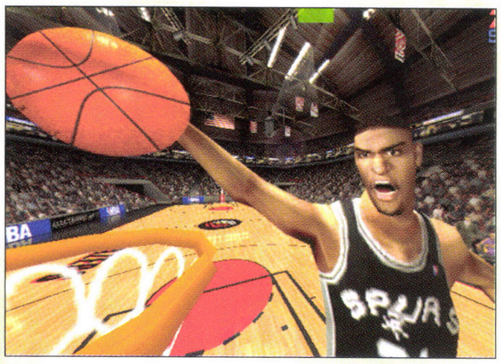


Publisher: THQ
Developer: Polygon Magic
Available: August 1999
Booth #: 2608

In development for more than a year, THQ's *Shao Lin* for the PlayStation is at last nearing completion. This polygonal pummel-fest joins multi-player action (up to four players can go at it at once) with a "Hong Kong, Kung Fu movie plot." There are 30 different characters to choose from, each with his or her own unique arsenal of fighting skills. THQ has invested a lot of time tweaking the game's control in hopes of earning the respect of fighting game aficionados everywhere.

SONY PLAYSTATION

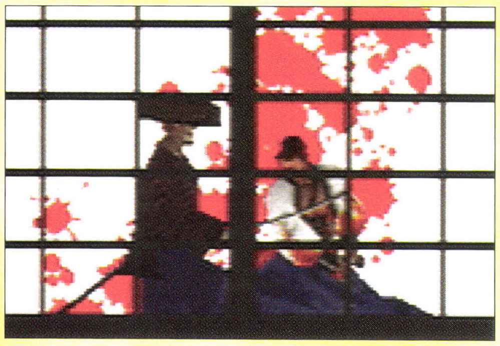
NBA Live 2000



Publisher: EA Sports
Developer: EA Sports
Available: Fall 1999
Booth #: 900

The *NBA Live* series is one of the best selling franchises for EA and this year's update will be no different. *Live 2000* features updated rosters and uniforms from every NBA team along with new player speech to go along with last year's facial animations. New broadcast style camera technology will be added for dramatic effect. Also for the first time, *Live 2000* allows users to challenge NBA players to a game of one-on-one street ball.

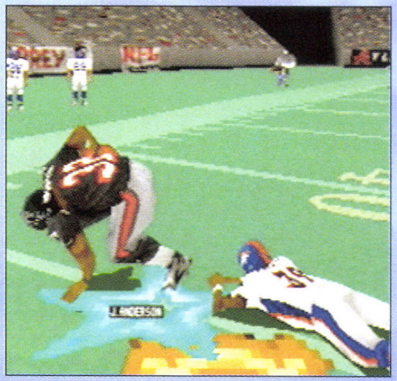
Soul of the Samurai



Publisher: Konami
Developer: Konami
Available: June 1999
Booth #: 800

Konami's newest game *Soul of the Samurai* (formerly *Shogun Assassins*), has a lot of potential. The backgrounds in *Soul of the Samurai* are all pre-rendered, while the characters are fully polygonal 3D models. Set in ancient Japan, when the samurai were still a prominent part of society, *Soul of the Samurai* is sure to impress.

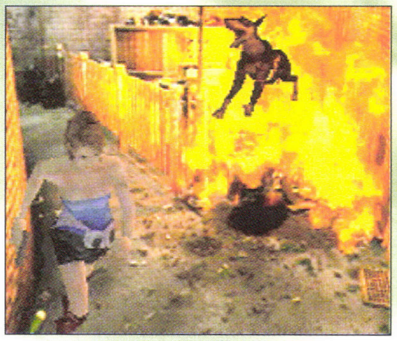
Madden NFL 2000



Publisher: EA Sports
Developer: EA Sports
Available: Fall 1999
Booth #: 900

The venerable *Madden* franchise returns for yet another year of gridiron action. *Madden NFL 2000* marks the series' tenth anniversary and EA Sports plans to celebrate with all-new features. *Madden 2000* will feature the All-Madden Millennium team, updated rosters and teams, including the Cleveland Browns and brand new motion capture technology for increased realism. In addition, EA has added a new arcade mode for completely over the top action.

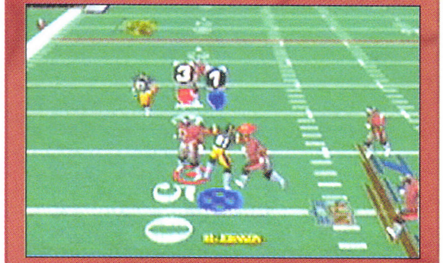
Resident Evil 3: Nemesis



Publisher: Capcom
Developer: Capcom
Available: November 1999
Booth #: 424

As far as PSX titles are concerned, this is the-eee big one for Capcom in Q4. Featuring hi-res background imagery, Nemesis takes place 24 hours before RE2 and 24 hours after RE2. Choose to take on the role of either a man named Carlos or Jill Valentine. Part of the plot: A mutated man/weapon named the Pursuer is after Jill. Packing 10 all-new zombies, a branching story line, a crafty "dodge" maneuver, and interactive backgrounds, this installment into the world of survival horror should be (ahem) a cut above the rest.

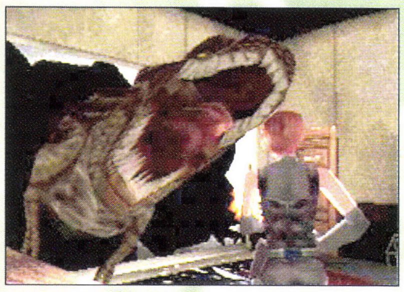
NFL Blitz 2000



Publisher: Midway
Developer: Midway
Available: Fall 1999
Booth #: 1124/306

Midway has revamped *Blitz 2000* to make it even more outrageous than last year's retail hit. Players will now be able to edit defense plays as well as offensive ones. In total they can create a book of 27 offensive and nine defensive plays and have nine customized offensive plays and nine customized defensive plays. In addition, four-player and on fire (where the offense or defense catches on fire for super power) modes will be in all versions of the game as well.

Dino Crisis



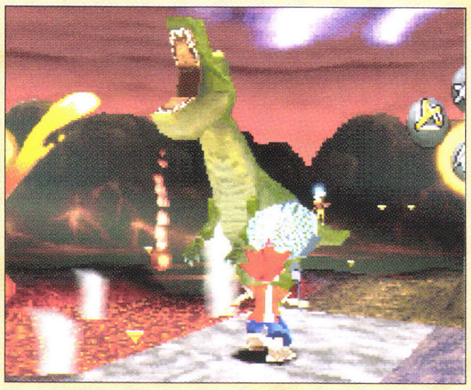
Publisher: Capcom
Developer: Capcom
Available: Fall 1999
Booth #: 424

Capcom's next approach to its "survival horror" genre, *Dino Crisis*, is truly an exhilarating experience. *Crisis* body slams the player into a world gone mad. Set on an island, the player assumes the role of Regina, a female member of an elite task force. A "time portal" has opened, leaving dinosaurs on the prowl. Crisis is rendered in real-time and contains plenty of amazing gameplay elements. This should be hot.

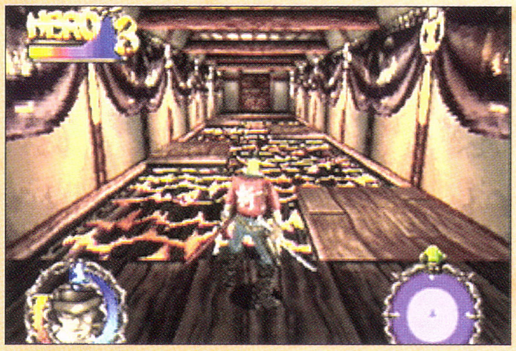
Ape Escape

Publisher: SCEA
Developer: SCEA
Available: June 1999
Booth #: 2416

Gamers will have more fun than a barrel of monkeys with Sony's *Ape Escape*. As a boisterous baboon named Specter, it is your job to lead a daring zoo escape. This new 3D action/adventure game will take full advantage of the Dual Shock controller.



Rising Zan: The Samurai Gunman

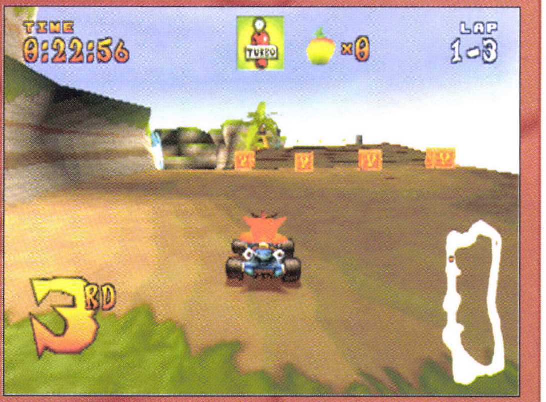


Publisher: AGETEC
Developer: UEP Systems
Available: September, 1999
Booth #: 2508

Best described as *The Wild, Wild West* meets *Kung Fu*, *Rising Zan* is a true breath of fresh air. Developed by UEP Systems (of *Cool Boarders* fame), Zan has been available in Japan for several months, and combines gunplay with swordplay. Set in the late 1800's, players slash and shoot their way through 10 levels in hopes of saving a town. The hero of the game is awarded special finishing moves and "sexy" points at the end of each level, based on performance. To compliment the button-mashing violence, there are also puzzles, boss battles, hidden characters and mini-games.

CTR: Crash Team Racing

Publisher: SCEA
Developer: SCEA
Available: Q4 1999
Booth #: 2416



Sony's unofficial mascot, *Crash Bandicoot* is back for yet another round of mischievous mayhem on the PlayStation. Unlike previous *Crash* games that focused on platforming action, *Crash Team Racing* is a multi-player kart racing game–similar in style to *Mario Kart*. Players select from eight characters including Crash and many of his rowdy friends. Race over 20 tracks in Adventure, Time Trial, Versus, Gran Prix and Battle modes. The object is to place first using any and all means necessary including using weapons and racing dirty. Plenty of special weapons, environmental hazards and hidden goodies are littered throughout the courses for players to find.

Reviews

GameWEEK Reviews reflect the sales potential of a specific product. Each review is an evaluation of a product's potential performance at retail. They are designed to provide retail buyers and store managers with the most accurate, up to date information available regarding upcoming releases. GameWEEK Reviews do not attempt to evaluate products on their technical merits or gameplay the way an enthusiast magazine does, although these are factors in the overall grade. GameWEEK Reviews do not intend to help or hinder a product's overall success in any way.

GameWEEK RATINGS SYSTEM

A	*Will be one of the best selling games for that particular platform. Strong marketing and word of mouth complement superb gameplay and excellent design. This is a must-stock game for any retail/rental store.*
B	*Great game that is just lacking in some areas. It will sell well and bring in the masses, but not to the extent of an "A" title. Retailers should make sure to buy this product deep enough to satisfy their individual store demands with some to spare.*
C	*A good game that will sell about "average" in terms of sales. It is lacking in a few departments, therefore not worthy of a "B." A "C" game is still a solid seller especially within niche categories.*
D	*A game that is unsupported in terms of marketing by the manufacturer, lacking in quality and should have stayed in development longer. This category may rent occasionally and sell only to legitimate fans.*
F	*A product that never should have been considered, much less released. A thoroughly unimpressive title that will only sell at drastically discounted prices.*

Software Reviews

Command and Conquer 64

Platform: Nintendo 64
Publisher: Nintendo
Developer: Looking Glass
Available: June 1999
MSRP: $59.95
Contact: 206.882.2040
www.nintendo.com

GW Rating: B

Breakdown	Hype	Marketing	Up Against	Bottom Line
Real-time strategy is finally coming to the N64 by way of *Command and Conquer*. The PC title is making its way to the console with exclusive features including 3D graphics and unique functions utilizing the analog controller. Players will be able to battle both NOD and GDI Forces in this new port to the N64.	This title has been relatively quiet until now. Early previews on gaming sites have been positive and Nintendo will begin print advertising campaign very soon.	Full national marketing support. Extensive advertising campaign in enthusiast publications and in-store point-of-purchase materials.	There's very little competition in the real-time strategy category on N64. Nintendo will take full advantage of the fact with *C&C 64*. The only other title to compete with it is Nintendo's own *StarCraft 64*, which will be released in the fall.	Face it, real-time strategy is non-existent on the N64 and what better way to introduce it than with *Command and Conquer*. With *StarCraft* coming later on in the year, releasing in June makes this product a solid hit.

V-Rally Edition 1999

Platform: N64
Publisher: Infogrames
Developer: Infogrames
Available: June 1999
MSRP: $59.95
Contact: 408.289.1200
www.infogrames.net/realindex.shtml

GW Rating: B

Breakdown	Hype	Marketing	Up Against	Bottom Line
Featuring 50 tracks spread over eight worldwide locations, *V-Rally Edition '99* puts the thrill and excitement of true-to-life rally racing at gamers' fingertips. Players can race any one of 11 official World-Rally Championship cars plus four bonus cars across varying terrain.	*V-Rally* has received plenty of previews thanks to a dedicated press tour from Infogrames. Early hype on the Internet has also been positive.	Primary print advertising in gaming magazines (*GamePro, OPM, EGM, Expert Gamer, Next Gen*). In-store videos will be available to video game specialty retailers.There will be a dedicated website for the game, as well as In-store point of purchase materials.	*California Speed, Beetle Adventure Racing, World Driver Championship*	Rally racing is not as popular in the States as it is in Europe. Previous racing titles have done reasonably well on N64, however the racing genre has gotten very crowed and the competition will be fierce.

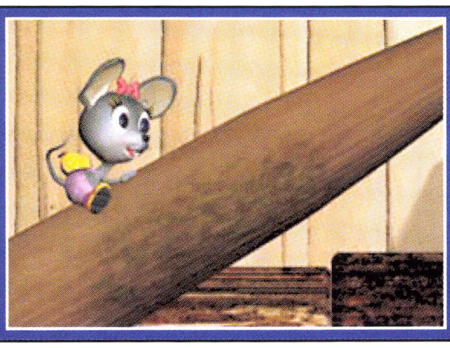
R-Type Delta

Platform: PlayStation
Publisher: Agetec
Developer: Irem Software
Available: June 1999
MSRP: $39.95
Contact: 650.780.0166
www.agetec.com

GW Rating: C+

Breakdown	Hype	Marketing	Up Against	Bottom Line
R-Type Delta will offer new 3D graphics as wave after wave of enemies engage your spacecraft in a firefight to the death. Packed with seven levels of space-shooting action and the most lethal bosses ever, the latest installment of *R-Types* lets players choose between three spacecrafts, plus one hidden one.	The hype has been extremely positive. The import version has scored highly on gaming websites.	Print full-page ads upon release of the product in consumer gaming publications *PSM, Game Fan, Gamers Republic*, etc. Online press coverage on all major gaming Sites. Gameplay footage featured in *Gamer's Republic* promotional trailer distributed on 1.8 million copies of "*The Corruptor*" home video.	*G-Darius* *Einhander*	These types of games are still a niche product. With sales results failing to impress for games like *G-Darius* and *Einhander* it's likely *R-Type Delta* will follow suit and do average numbers.

The Search for Grandma's Remedy



Platform: PC/Mac
Publisher: Kutoka
Developer: Kutoka
Available: Now
MSRP: $29.95
Contact: 514.525.2222
www.kutoka.com

GW Rating: C+

Breakdown	Hype	Marketing	Up Against	Bottom Line
Aimed at kids 5 and up, this is the best 3D adventure since Activision's *Twinsen's Odyssey*. The animations are feature-film quality, the story is easy to follow, and the games are fun to play. Although main character-Mia isn't quite as popular as Pokémon, she is a sweet little mouse and kids will love her.	This game was first released in Canada and received quite a bit of recognition in Canadian publications such as *Le Soleil* and *Le Journal de Montréal*.	Besides a dedicated website, there's not been much advertising or marketing behind this title.	Although Kutoka is relatively unknown, *Mia: The Search for Grandma's Remedy* was voted "Best of Show" last month at Retail Vision, beating out big boys LucasArts, Hasbro and SouthPeak.	Most kid's games are "spell that" and "match this." In many respects Mia is similar. However, because this game allows the player to set their own pace, it will appeal to the player who likes to take their time and enjoy the game rather than rushing through to the very end.

Command & Conquer: Tiberian Sun

Platform: PC
Publisher: Westwood
Developer: Westwood
Available: June 1999
MSRP: $49.95
Contact: 702.228.4040
www.westwood.com

GW Rating: A+

Breakdown	Hype	Marketing	Up Against	Bottom Line
From the blockbuster *Command & Conquer* series, Westwood will release the sequel to *Command & Conquer*, one of the most anticipated titles of 1999. Set 20 years after the events of the first *C&C, Tiberian Sun* features new units and weapons, lighting effects, dynamic 3D terrain and realistic physics.	The amount of hype this title has been generating is amazing. The initial hype has been extremely positive and the buzz on the Web grows bigger everyday.	Currently the print advertising is planned to cover all PC gaming publications. Posters and a new four-minute sizzle movie will also be supplied to retailers who are willing to accommodate. The *Command & Conquer Tiberian Sun Collector's Edition* is limited to a production run of only 50,000 pieces.	*Total Annihilation: Kingdoms* *StarCraft* *Age of Empires II* *Homeworld*	Even though other titles have taken the spotlight recently in the RTS genre, there is a solid base of *Command and Conquer* fans waiting patiently for this title. Look for high pre-sell movement and strong sell-through on this title.

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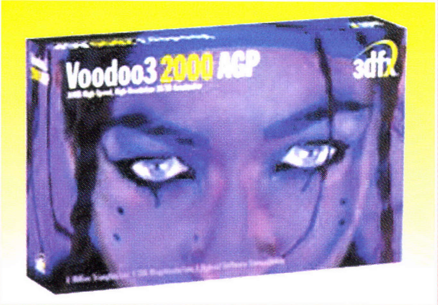
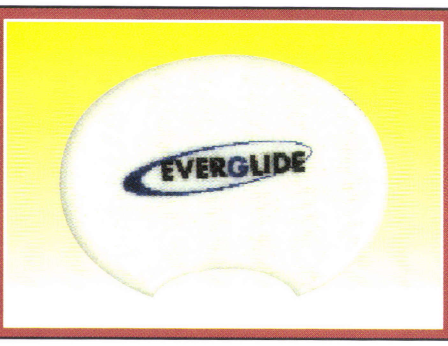
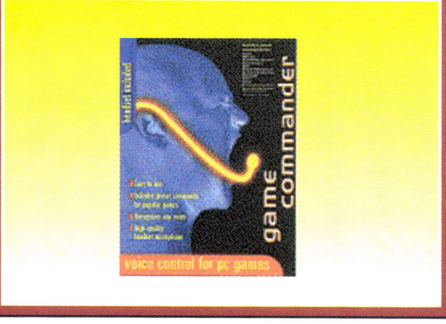
Hardware & Accessories

Product	Details	Breakdown	Hype	Marketing	Up Against	Bottom Line
Voodoo3 2000 AGP 	**Platform:** PC **Publisher:** 3dfx Interactive **Developer:** 3dfx Interactive **Available:** Now **MSRP:** $129.99 **Contact:** 888.FOR.3DFX www.3dfx.com **GW Rating:** B+	The entry-level model in 3dfx's line of "next generation" graphic accelerators. It comes in PCI or AGP slot configurations and, unlike the previous "Voodoo" boards (with the exception of Voodoo Banshee, which didn't really offer cutting-edge output), provides 2D and 3D output.	3dfx, aided by the acquisition of board manufacturer STB, is the first out in the next wave of graphic accelerators. The 3dfx brand is probably the strongest in its category-a big positive-and its pricing is competitive. Best of all, it offers solid 2D and 3D performance.	A new logo and website design, eye-catching packaging and a $20 million ad campaign accompany the first 3dfx-branded boards. The ads—during the first half of '99—are online banners, print spreads (gaming and non-gaming) and hilarious TV spots from the agency responsible for the "Got Milk?" ads.	Existing graphic accelerators (Riva TNT and its own, Voodoo^2, Voodoo Banshee and Voodoo^3 3000 among them), as well as soon-to-appear "next-generation"—and perhaps higher performance—boards, such as Riva TNT2, Matrox G400, Savage4 and its own forthcoming Voodoo^3 3500, among others.	Being first out in the category and its performance strides are wins. However, be careful not to overstock because there are a lot of quality competitors on the horizon. Also, some may question if upgrading is essential, and STB purchase means no more third-party licensees (Creative and Diamond, for example).
EverGlide Attack Mouse Pad 	**Platform:** PC **Developer:** Blooming Tree **Available:** Now **MSRP:** $9.95 Small, $12.95 Medium, $14.95 Large pad **Contact:** www.everglide.com **GW Rating:** B	The EverGlide mousing surface features high-density plastic that will never wear out. There is no foam core or fabric to crack, peel or fade. The durable stone textured finish is washable for clean traction control and dependable accuracy for today's advanced 3D games.	The EverGlide pads have received favorable attention from *Computer Gaming World*, *PC Gamer*, *Computerworld* and *Boot* magazine. In addition, online gaming sites have endorsed it as a great product for first-person shooters that require pinpoint control.	EverGlide has a dedicated website and is marketed primarily online, although its manufacturer says it will begin running print ads in trade publications.	The primary competition for EverGlide remains the traditional foam pads.	The EverGlide pads work surprisingly well, especially with most of today's hottest games. The plastic surface is more responsive and durable than a regular mouse pad. This product will most likely appeal to gamers and consumers who are environmentally conscious.
Game Commander 	**Platform:** PC Win95/98 **Publisher:** Mindmaker, Inc. **Developer:** Mindmaker, Inc. **Available:** Now **MSRP:** $49.95 **Contact:** 408.467.9200 www.gamecmdr.com **GW Rating:** B	Game Commander is an amazing product: a voice recognition device that actually works right out of the box. Connect the microphone, install the software, and you're ready to go. Game Commander replaces the need to remember keyboard commands by allowing the player to speak commands.	Consumer voice recognition has been around since the days of Windows 3.1, but its application in gaming has never been that useful (why scream FIRE! FIRE! when you could just press the a button?). Mindmaker is busy working to reverse gamers' skepticism towards a product like Game Commander.	Mindmaker has been working with consumer publications and websites for product coverage, including the Imagine Games Network and newspapers such as the Chicago Herald and Winnipeg Sun. The product was also featured at the Game Developers Conference in CA.	There's nothing comparable in the gaming market today to compete with the Game Commander. Other voice recognition software like Voice Xpress and Dragon Naturally Speaking are geared towards word processing dictation.	Last year saw a slew of keyboard replacement controllers, such as QuickShot's MasterPilot and Saitek's PC Dash. Game Commander's simple setup and accurate recognition makes remembering keyboard commands a thing of the past, assuming gamers can get used to talking to their PCs.
GameShark Pro 	**Platform:** PlayStation **Publisher:** InterAct **Developer:** InterAct **Available:** Now **MSRP:** $49.99 **Contact:** 410.2538.2424 www.interact-acc.com **GW Rating:** A	InterAct has loaded its venerable videogame enhancement peripheral with a ton of new features. Besides the usual cheats for unlimited lives, ammo, health, etc., the GameShark Pro can emulate up to eight memory cards for saving video game data and lets you view game movies and graphics.	InterAct has done an excellent job of keeping the GameShark line of peripherals in the forefront of the gaming market. Their websites, including the dedicated www.gameshark.com keep gamers up-to-date on the latest codes as do special tip sections in magazines like *Tips & Tricks*.	In addition to the aforementioned GameShark-specific code sections in the hint departments of gaming magazines, InterAct promotes its products with regular ad buys in the major gaming consumer publications.	Super Game Wizard Pro-Action Replay	Priced the same as the original model and preloaded with codes for over 350 PlayStation games, the GameShark Pro is an excellent value considering its memory card capabilities, the built in code generator and the bonus video tape, *"How to Hack Like a Pro."*

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TOPDRIVE 2 PS430

Fresh from *Logic 3* comes the TOPDRIVE 2. Dedicated PlayStation engineering coupled with advanced gaming technology pushes gameplay to a new level of realism. 'Dual Shock' compatible and upgradeable with optional GEARSHIFT. Leave the rest behind – with TOPDRIVE 2!

TOPDRIVE PLUS PN428

New for this season from Logic 3, the TOPDRIVE PLUS. At last a 'Dual Shock' wheel that fully captures the excitement and realism of todays racing games. Dual Format for PSX and N64 with built in vibration and twin 'Dual Shock' motors. Realistic pedals and programmable gearshift give you the ultimate gaming experience.

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Logic 3

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Release Schedule

Logic 3
(513) 336-1370

Game Boy Color

Product Title	Manuf./ Publisher	Pre-Book Date	EST Ship Date
Alexi Lalas Soccer	Take 2	5/99	6/99
Asteroids	Crave	TBA	Q2
Barbie: Ocean Discovery	Mattel Media	TBA	Q2
Bass Fishing	Nintendo	5/99	6/28/99
CatZ	Mindscape	7/99	8/99
DogZ	Mindscape	7/99	8/99
Chessmaster	Mindscape	4/99	5/99
Defender/Joust	Midway	TBA	Q2
Deer Hunter	Vatical	5/99	6/99
Disney's Tarzan	Activision	TBA	Q2
Duke Nukem	GT Interactive	5/99	6/99
Griffey's Slugfest	Nintendo	4/99	5/10/99
Intl. Track & Field	Konami	5/99	6/99
Klustar	Infogrames	4/99	5/99
Mario Golf	Nintendo	TBA	Q3
Mission: Impossible	Infogrames	8/99	9/99
Motocross Maniacs	Konami	5/99	6/99
Pokemon Pinball	Nintendo	4/99	5/10/99
Pokemon Yellow	Nintendo	TBA	Q4
Prince of Persia	Mindscape	3/99	4/99
R-Type DX	Nintendo	5/99	6/28/99
Revelations: D.S.	Atlus	5/99	6/99
Roadsters '99	Titus	TBA	Q4
Rugrats Movie	THQ	TBA	Q2
San Francisco Rush	Midway	TBA	Q2
Smurfs Nightmare	Infogrames	3/99	4/99
Space Station: Silicn Vlly	Take 2	TBA	Q2
Spawn	Konami	4/99	5/99
Spy Hunter/Moon Patrol	Midway	TBA	Q2
Super Mario Bros.	Nintendo	4/99	5/10/99
Survival Kids	Konami	6/99	7/99
Vigilante 8	Vatical	5/99	6/99
Wicked Surfing	Interplay	5/99	6/99
Xena & Hercules	Titus	TBA	Q4
Yar's Revenge	Activision	TBA	Q3
Yoda Stories	THQ	5/99	6/99
Zebco Fishing	Vatical	5/99	6/99

Macintosh

Product Title	Manuf./ Publisher	Pre-Book Date	EST Ship Date
Adventures of J. Quest	DreamCatcher	4/99	5/99
Age of Empires	MacSoft	TBA	Q2
Aliens vs. Predators	Logicware	TBA	Q3
Aquazone Deluxe	Mindscape	5/99	6/99
Battlezone	Logicware	TBA	Q3
Caesar 3	Sierra	5/99	6/99
CatZ	Mindscape	7/99	8/99
Carmageddon 2	SCI	TBA	Q2
Deer Avenger II	Simon & Schuster	TBA	Q3
Falcon 4.0	MacSoft	TBA	Q2
Heretic II	Logicware	TBA	Q3
Interstate '76	Logicware	TBA	Q4
Oni	Bungie	TBA	Q4
Quake III: Arena	id Software	5/99	6/99
StarCraft: Brood Wars	Blizzard	5/99	6/99
Star Trek: Creator Add-on	Simon & Schuster	4/99	5/99
Star Wars: Pod Racer	LucasArts	TBA	Q3
Tanaka	Pacific Media	TBA	Q2
The Crystal Key	DreamCatcher	7/99	8/99
The Forgotten	DreamCatcher	5/99	6/99
Total Annihilation	MacSoft	TBA	Q2
TZAR	Haemimont	TBA	Q2
Zork: Grand Inquisitor	Logicware	TBA	Q2

Nintendo 64

Product Title	Manuf./ Publisher	Pre-Book Date	EST Ship Date
40 Winks	GT Interactive	TBA	Q3
A Bug's Life	Activision	TBA	Q3
AirBoardin' USA	Agetec	5/99	6/99
All Star Tennis '99	Ubi Soft	4/99	5/99
Armorines	Acclaim	TBA	Q3
Army Men: SH	3DO	TBA	Q4
Asteroids	Crave	TBA	Q3
Bass Masters Classic	THQ	TBA	Q4
Battlezone	Crave	TBA	Q4
Blues Brothers 2000	Titus	TBA	Q4
Caesar's Palace	Crave	TBA	Q3
Carmageddon 64	Interplay	TBA	Q3
Command & Conquer	Nintendo	5/99	6/28/99
Deer Hunter	Vatical	TBA	Q3
Donkey Kong 64	Nintendo	10/98	11/99
Duke Nukem:Zero Hour	GT Interactive	7/99	8/99
Earthbound 64	Nintendo	TBA	Q4
F1 World Grand Prix 2	Nintendo	TBA	8/99
Gauntlet Legends	Midway	8/99	9/99
Gex 3: D.C. Gecko	Eidos Interactive	TBA	Q3
Goemon's Great Adv.	Konami	4/99	5/99
Grand Theft Auto	Rockstar	TBA	Q4
Harvest Moon 64	Natsume	TBA	Q2
Hercules	Titus	TBA	Q4
Hybrid Heaven	Konami	5/99	6/99
Hydro Thunder	Midway	9/99	10/99
Hyper Bike	Kemco	TBA	Q3
In-Fisherman Bass Hntr	Take 2	6/99	7/99
Jeff Gordon Racing	ASC Games	8/99	9/99
Jet Force Gemini	Nintendo/Rare	6/99	7/99
Kobe Bryant Courtside 2	Nintendo	TBA	Q4
Lego Racers	Lego Media	TBA	Q3
Looney Tunes: Spce Rce	Infogrames	5/99	6/99
Mario Golf	Nintendo	8/99	9/99
Monaco GP	Ubi Soft	5/99	6/99
Monster Truck Madness	Take 2	6/99	7/99
Mortal Kombat: S.F.	Midway	TBA	Q3
NBA Jam 2000	Acclaim	10/99	11/99
NFL Blitz 2000	Midway	TBA	Q3
Nomenquest	THQ	TBA	Q4
Nuclear Strike	THQ	TBA	Q2
Ogre Battle 3	Nintendo	TBA	Q3
Paperboy	Midway	TBA	Q4
Perfect Dark	Nintendo/Rare	TBA	Q4
Playmobil	Ubi Soft	TBA	Q2
Pokemon Snap	Nintendo	5/99	6/99
Pokemon Stadium	Nintendo	TBA	Q4
Quake II	Activision	5/99	6/99
Rainbow Six	Red Storm	TBA	Q3
Rat Attack	Mindscape Ent.	7/99	8/99
Rayman II	Ubi Soft	8/99	9/99
Ready 2 Rumble	Midway	TBA	Q3
Resident Evil 2	Capcom	TBA	Q4
Re-Volt	Acclaim	TBA	Q2
Road Rash 3D	THQ	TBA	Q3
Roadsters '99	Titus	TBA	Q4
Rugrats Board Game	THQ	TBA	Q2
Shadowgate 64	Vatical	5/99	6/99
Shadow Man	Acclaim	TBA	Q3
Spider-Man	Activision	TBA	Q3
StarCraft	Nintendo	TBA	Q2
Starshot	Infogrames	4/99	5/99
Star Wars E1: Racer	Nintendo	4/99	5/27/99
Star Wars: PM	Nintendo	TBA	Q4
Superman	Titus	5/99	6/99
The New Tetris	Nintendo	6/99	7/99
Tiger Woods Golf 2000	EA Sports	TBA	Q4
Tonic Trouble	Ubi Soft	5/99	6/99
Twelve Tales: Conker 64	Nintendo/Rare	TBA	Q4
Quake II	Activision	5/99	6/99
V-Rally	Infogrames	4/99	5/99
Wild Metal Country	Gremlin	TBA	Q3
WinBack	Koei	TBA	Q3
World Driver Champ.	Midway	5/99	6/99
WWF Attitude	Acclaim	8/99	9/99
X-Men	Activision	TBA	Q4
Xena: Warrior Princess	Titus	TBA	Q4

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PC

Product Title	Manuf./ Publisher	Pre-Book Date	EST Ship Date
20,000 Leagues	SouthPeak	9/99	10/99
A-10 Warthog	Electronic Arts	5/99	6/99
Adventures of J. Quest	DreamCatcher	5/99	6/99
Age of Empires II	Microsoft	8/99	9/99
Allegiance	Microsoft	TBA	Q4
All-Star Baseball 2000	Acclaim	4/99	5/99
Alien Resurrection	Fox Interactive	8/99	9/99
Amen	GT Interactive	8/99	9/99
Anachronox	Eidos	6/99	7/99
Ancient Conquest	Re-Action Ent.	4/99	5/99
Aquazone Deluxe	Mindscape	5/99	6/99
Armorines	Acclaim	TBA	Q3
Babyz	Mindscape Ent.	10/99	11/99
Baldur's Gate Add-on	Interplay	7/99	8/99
Barbie Tattoos	Mattel	TBA	Q2
Barbie Ultra Sports	Mattel	TBA	Q2
Barbie Gotta Groove	Mattel	TBA	Q4
Baseball Pro 99	Sierra Sports	9/99	10/99
Battlezone II	Activision	6/99	7/99
Beneath	Activision	TBA	Q2
Black & White	Electronic Arts	TBA	Q3
Blue's 123	Humongous	5/99	6/99
Brunswick Bowling 2	THQ	TBA	Q4
CatZ 4	Mindscape Ent.	8/99	9/99
Chessmaster 7000	Mindscape Ent.	8/99	9/99
Civil War Experience	SouthPeak	7/99	8/99
C & C Tiberian Sun	Electronic Arts	6/99	7/99
Confirmed Kill	Eidos	TBA	Q3
Conquest: FW	Microsoft	8/99	9/99
Counter Strike	Infogrames	5/99	6/99
Creatures 3	Mindscape Ent.	9/99	10/99
Creatures Adventures	Mindscape Ent.	8/99	9/99
Croc II	Fox Interactive	TBA	Q2
Curse You! Red Baron	Sierra	5/99	6/99
Daikatana	Eidos	TBA	Q4
Dark Reign 2	Activision	6/99	7/99
Dead Unity	THQ	TBA	Q2
Deus Ex	Eidos	7/99	8/99
Diablo 2	Blizzard	5/99	6/99
Dragon	Microsoft	TBA	Q4
Drakan: Order o.t. Flame	Psygnosis	4/99	5/99
Driver	GT Interactive	6/99	7/8/99
DogZ 4	Mindscape	8/99	9/99
Duke Nukem Forever	GT Interactive	TBA	Q3
Dungeon Keeper 2	Electronic Arts	5/99	6/99
Elysium	GT Interactive	TBA	Q4
F-18 Super Hornet	Titus	4/99	5/99
Falcon 4.0 Add-On	MicroProse	4/99	5/99
F&S Trophy Bass 3D	Sierra Sports	5/99	6/99
Fighter Duel 2.0	Infogrames	TBA	Q2
Fighting Steel	Mindscape Ent.	5/99	6/99
Flanker 2.0	Mindscape Ent.	4/99	5/99
Flash Point	Red Storm	5/99	6/99
Flight Unlimited 3	Electronic Arts	8/99	9/99
Fly!	The Gathering	5/99	6/99
Force 21	Red Storm	6/99	7/99
Full Auto	Microsoft	TBA	Q4
Giants	Interplay	5/99	6/99
Gunship 3	MicroProse	TBA	Q3
Half-Life: Team Fortress	Sierra	9/99	10/99
Hot Wheels Crash	Mattel	8/99	9/99
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Independence War	Infogrames	7/99	8/99
Indiana Jones & I.M.	LucasArts	TBA	Q3
Inertia	Microsoft	TBA	Q4
Inherent Evil	Activision	5/99	6/99
Intl. Rally Championship	THQ	TBA	Q3
Jeff Gordon Racing	ASC Games	6/99	7/99
Kingpin	Interplay	5/99	6/99
KISS: Psycho Circus	The Gathering	TBA	Q4
Legacy of Kain	Eidos	5/99	6/99
Lego Friends	Lego Media	8/99	9/99
Legoland Classic	Lego Media	5/99	6/99
Lego Racers	Lego Media	6/99	7/99
Lego Rock Raiders	Lego Media	8/99	9/99
Le Mans	Infogrames	6/99	7/99
Liath	Project Two	8/99	9/99
Links Extreme Vol. 1	Access	4/99	5/99
MadTrax	Project Two	8/99	9/99
Majesty	Ripcord	5/99	6/99
Maisy	Simon & Schus.	7/99	8/99
Matchbox Hard Hat	Mattel	8/99	9/99
Max Payne	Gathering of Dev.	7/99	8/99
Mechwarrior 3	MicroProse	TBA	Q2
Messiah	Interplay	8/99	9/99
Metal Fatigue	Psygnosis	5/99	6/99
Microsoft Football	Microsoft	8/99	9/99
Missile Command 3D	Hasbro	8/99	9/99
Mission: Impossible	Infogrames	TBA	Q3
Mordor 2	Interplay	8/99	9/99
Myst Collector's Ed.	Mindscape Ent.	8/99	9/99
Navy SEALS	Sierra	TBA	Q4
NASCAR Road Racing	EA Sports	5/99	6/99
NASCAR Racing 3	Sierra	8/99	9/99
NBA Drive 2000	Microsoft	TBA	Q4
NBA Live 2000	EA Sports	TBA	Q4
Need for Speed: H.S.	EA	5/99	6/99
NHL 2000	EA Sports	TBA	Q4
Nocturne	Gathering of Dev.	9/99	10/99
Nox	Electronic Arts	TBA	Q3
Odium	Monolith	TBA	Q4
Omikron: Nomad Soul	Eidos	9/99	10/99
Oni	Bungie	TBA	Q4
Outcast	Infogrames	5/99	6/99
Panzer General 3	Mindscape Ent.	8/99	9/99
Pern: Dragonflight	Grolier Interactive	7/99	8/99
Pharoah	Sierra Studios	TBA	Q3
PGA Championship Golf	Sierra Sports	5/99	6/99
Planescape: Torment	Interplay	6/99	7/99
Prince Of Persia 3D	Mindscape Ent.	7/99	8/99
Professional Bull Rider	Sierra Sports	8/99	9/99
Q*bert 3D	Hasbro	8/99	9/99
Quake III: Arena	Activision	5/99	6/99
Quest/Glory Expansion	Sierra	7/99	8/99
Rainbow Six 2	Redstorm	8/99	9/99
Rayman 2	Ubi Soft	9/99	10/99
Revenant	Eidos	7/99	8/99
Re-Volt	Acclaim	6/99	7/99
Sanity	Monolith	TBA	Q4
Sega Rally 2	Sega	5/99	6/99
Septerra Core	Monolith	9/99	10/99
Seven Kingdoms II	Interactive Magic	TBA	Q4
Shadow Man	Acclaim	5/99	6/99
Shadowpact	Blue Byte	TBA	Q4
Silent Hunter II	Mindscape Ent.	8/99	9/99
Silver	Infogrames	TBA	Q3
Sinistar Unleashed	THQ	8/99	9/99
Skydive	EA	5/99	6/99
Slave Zero	Accolade	5/99	6/99
Soldier	SouthPeak	8/99	9/99
Space Girl	Titus	TBA	Q3
Spec Ops II: Green Berets	Ripcord	TBA	Q4
Starlancer	Microsoft	TBA	Q4
StarTrek: Birth/Federatn	MicroProse	4/99	5/99
Star Trek New Worlds	Interplay	TBA	Q3
StarTrek: Starfleet Com	Interplay	10/99	11/99
Star Wars: E1 Racer	LucasArts	4/99	5/99
Star Wars: Episode 1	LucasArts	5/99	6/99
SW: Force Commander	LucasArts	TBA	Q4
Super Bike 2	Intense Entert.	5/99	6/99
Survival	Re-Action Ent.	5/99	6/99
SU-25	MIndscape Ent.	10/99	11/99
Tank Racer	Grolier Int.	4/99	5/99
Tenchu	Activision	4/99	5/99
The Crystal Key	DreamCatcher	7/99	8/99
The Forgotten	DreamCatcher	5/99	6/99
The Next Tetris	Hasbro	8/99	9/99
Tonic Trouble	Ubi Soft	TBA	Q2
Total Annih. Kingdoms	GT Interactive	5/99	6/99
Total Annihilation 2	GT Interactive	TBA	Q3
Trans Am Racing 68-72	GT Interactive	8/99	9/99
Ultima Ascension	Electronic Arts	TBA	Q3
Ultra RC Racing	Sierra	9/99	10/99
Unreal Mission Pack	GT Interactive	4/99	5/99
Unreal Tournament	GT Interactive	5/99	6/99
Velocity	Acclaim	TBA	Q4
Virtual Deep Sea Fishing	Interplay	TBA	Q2
Wall Street Tycoon	Interactive Magic	4/99	5/99
Warcraft 2 Platinum	Sierra	6/99	7/99
Warhammer: Rites/War	Mindscape Ent.	5/99	6/99
Warlords IV	Mindscape Ent.	9/99	10/99
Werewolf: The Apoc.	ASC Games	11/99	12/99
West Front Elite Edition	TalonSoft	6/99	7/99
Wheel of Time	GT Interactive	6/99	7/99
Wild Metal Country	Gremlin	TBA	Q3
Wild,Wild West	SouthPeak	TBA	Q4
Worldcraft Pro	Blizzard	4/99	5/99
Worms 2 Armageddon	Hasbro	6/99	7/99

PlayStation

Product Title	Manuf./ Publisher	Pre-Book Date	EST Ship Date
Ace Combat 3	Namco	TBA	Q3
Age of Empires	Psygnosis	TBA	Q3
Alien Resurrection	Fox Interactive	5/99	6/99
Ape Escape	Sony	TBA	Q3
Atlantis	Infogrames	4/99	5/99
Bass Landing	Agetec	TBA	Q3
Bass Mastrs: Tourn Edit.	THQ	TBA	Q4
Beavis and Butthead	GT Interactive	TBA	Q4
Bloody Roar 2	SCEA	5/99	6/99
Broken Sword	Atlus	TBA	Q3
Brunswick Bowling 2	THQ	TBA	Q4
Cabela's Big Game PS	Vatical	5/99	6/99
Centipede	Hasbro Int.	5/99	6/99
Chessmaster Millenium	Mindscape Ent.	5/99	6/99
Clock Tower 2	Ascii	4/99	5/99
Croc 2	Fox Interactive	5/99	6/99
Crusaders of M&M	3DO	TBA	Q3
Danger Girl	THQ	TBA	Q3
Demolition Racer	Accolade	TBA	Q4
Diabolical Advent. of Tobu	989 Studios	5/99	6/99
Dino Crisis	Capcom	TBA	Q3
D.I.R.T.	FunCom	TBA	Q3
Dreams	Infogrames	4/99	5/99
Driver	GT Interactive	6/99	7/99
Echo Night	Agetec	5/99	6/99
Ehrgeiz	SquareEA	TBA	Q3
Fighter Maker	Agetec	5/99	6/99
Final Fantasy Anthology	SquareEA	TBA	Q3
Final Fantasy VIII	SquareEA	8/99	9/99
Gauntlet Legends	Midway	8/99	9/99
Grand Theft Auto: L69	Take 2	9/99	10/99
Gran Turismo 2	Sony	6/99	7/99
Guardian Legends	Activision	5/99	6/99
Gungage	Konami	4/99	5/99
Iron Soldier 3	Vatical	5/99	6/99
Jackie Chan's Stunt.	Midway	TBA	Q3
Jade Cocoon	Crave	TBA	Q3
Jeff Gordon Racing	ASC Games	5/99	6/99
J.M. Supercross 2000	Acclaim	TBA	Q3
Kawasaki Motocross	Activision	5/99	6/99
Kiss: Psycho Circus	Rockstar	10/99	11/99
Klingon Academy	Interplay	TBA	Q3
Knockout Kings 2000	EA Sports	TBA	Q3
Legacy of Kain	Eidos	5/99	6/99
Lego Racers	Lego Media	TBA	Q3
Lego Rock Raiders	Lego Media	TBA	Q3
Le Mans	Infogrames	4/99	5/99
Looney Tunes; LiT	Infogrames	4/99	5/99
Lufia III	Natsume	TBA	Q4
Madden NFL 2000	EA Sports	8/99	9/99
Mission: Impossible	Infogrames	5/99	6/99
Missile Command 3D	Hasbro	8/99	9/99
Mortal Kombat: S.F.	Midway	TBA	Q3
NASCAR 2000	EA Sports	TBA	Q4
NBA Live 2000	EA Sports	TBA	Q4
NBA Shootout 2000	989 Studios	TBA	Q4
NBA Showtime	Midway	TBA	Q4
NFL Xtreme 2	989 Studios	TBA	Q4
NHL 2000	EA Sports	TBA	Q4
Panzer General	Mindscape Ent.	8/99	9/99
Quake II	Activision	5/99	6/99
R Types Delta	Agetec	TBA	Q3
Railroad Tycoon II	Take 2	TBA	Q4
Rally Racing	Konami	4/99	5/99
Rat Attack	Mindscape Ent.	6/99	7/99
Rayman 2	Ubi Soft	TBA	Q3
RC Stunt Copter	Midway	5/99	6/99
Ready 2 Rumble	Midway	TBA	Q4
Rising Zan	Agetec	TBA	Q4
Saboteur	Eidos	TBA	Q3
Shadow Tower	Agetec	TBA	Q4
Shao Lin	THQ	5/99	6/99
Soul of the Samurai	Konami	5/99	6/99
Spec Ops	Take 2	TBA	Q4
Spider-Man	Activision	TBA	Q3
Star Ocean	SCEA	5/99	6/99
Star Wars: Episode One	LucasArts	TBA	5/20/99
Suikoden 2	Konami	5/99	6/99
Superman	Titus	5/99	6/99
The Next Tetris	Hasbro	5/99	6/99
Thousand Arms	Atlus	TBA	Q2
Thrasher	Rockstar	10/99	11/99
Tiger Woods Golf 2000	EA Sports	TBA	Q4
Tomorrow Never Dies	MGM Interactive	TBA	Q3
Toonenstein	Vatical	5/99	6/99
Tony Hawk's Pro Skater	Activision	5/99	6/99
Ultimate 8 Ball	THQ	5/99	6/99
Velocity	Acclaim	TBA	Q4
Vermin	Eidos	5/99	6/99
Virus	Infogrames	5/99	6/99
Warpath: Jurassic Park	EA	TBA	Q4
WCW Mayhem	EA Sports	TBA	Q4
Wild,Wild West	SouthPeak	TBA	Q4
Wipeout 3	Psygnosis	TBA	Q4
Worms 2 Armageddon	Hasbro	TBA	Q4

Manufacturers: If you have found that your company's products are improperly listed, are not listed, or are in need of updating, please ask your sales or PR department to send all relevant information to CyberActive Media Group, Inc., GameWEEK, 64 Danbury Road, Wilton, CT. 06897-4406 USA or fax your weekly updates to 203.761.6184. Questions regarding this section may be directed to Ben Rinaldi at 203.761.6158, ben@gameweek.com. Media: Permission to reprint GameWEEK Release Schedule in consumer-oriented enthusiast publications or mass media not dealing primarily in the interactive entertainment industry is granted provided appropriate credit is given.

Log in or Lose Out

Today's News—Today

From the Publishers of GameWEEK

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Cheats

ALL every single one
Cheats
NEXT PAGE
A|B|C|D|E|F|G|H|I|J|K|L|M|N|O|P|Q|R|S|T|U|V|W|X|Y|Z|ALL
CONTROL PANEL
SEARCH FOR
Cheats
IN CATEGORY
All Categories
FOR PLATFORM
All Platforms
SORT BY
○ Game Title
● GP Rating
CHANGE LIST COUNT TO
10
search

Blood cheat
Action game for Win 95, Win 3.X, DOS
REVIEW DEMO PATCH VIDEO DSKTP THEME

Chaos Island cheat
Strategy game for Win 95
REVIEW VIDEO

Command & Conquer: Red Alert cheat
Strategy game for Win 95, DOS
REVIEW DEMO PATCH DSKTP THEME

Commandos: Behind Enemy Lines cheat
A real-time tactical war game that puts you in command of a squad of elite Allied Commandos whose job is to complete 24 dangerous missions behind enemy lines.
Strategy game for Win 95
REVIEW DEMO VIDEO

Dark Reign: The Future Of War cheat
Strategy game for Win 95
REVIEW DEMO PATCH HINT VIDEO DSKTP THEME

Diablo cheat
Action, RPG game for Win 95
REVIEW DEMO PATCH HINT VIDEO DSKTP THEME

Gran Turismo cheat
Gran Turismo really is two games in one for the PlayStation — it's a lighter arcade racer and a totally hard-core racing sim.
Sims game for PlayStation
REVIEW

Half-Life cheat
First-person action adventure. Where should you go? Who can you trust? Can you figure it out before they scrape you into a body bag?
Action game for Win 95
REVIEW DEMO PATCH VIDEO

Heroes Of Might & Magic II cheat
Strategy game for Win 95, DOS
REVIEW HINT DSKTP THEME

Heroes Of Might And Magic III: The Restoration Of Erathia cheat
Not only is the third installment worthy of the Heroes name, it has everything that made the first two so great, plus enough brilliance to win over a whole new legion of fans.
Strategy game for Win 95
REVIEW DEMO PATCH VIDEO

NEXT PAGE
GO TO PAGE: 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11 12 13 14 15 16 17 18 19 20 21 22 23 24 25 26 27 28

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ALL every single one
DEMOS
NEXT PAGE
A|B|C|D|E|F|G|H|I|J|K|L|M|N|O|P|Q|R|S|T|U|V|W|X|Y|Z|ALL
CONTROL PANEL
SEARCH FOR
Demos
IN CATEGORY
All Categories
FOR PLATFORM
All Platforms
SORT BY
○ Game Title
● GP Rating
CHANGE LIST COUNT TO
10
search

Blood demo
Action game for Win 95, Win 3.X, DOS
REVIEW PATCH CHEAT VIDEO DSKTP THEME

Chessmaster 5000 demo
Classic game for Win 95
REVIEW

Command & Conquer: Red Alert demo
Strategy game for Win 95, DOS
REVIEW PATCH CHEAT DSKTP THEME

Commandos: Behind Enemy Lines demo
A real-time tactical war game that puts you in command of a squad of elite Allied Commandos whose job is to complete 24 dangerous missions behind enemy lines.
Strategy game for Win 95
REVIEW CHEAT VIDEO

Dark Reign: The Future Of War demo
Strategy game for Win 95
REVIEW PATCH CHEAT HINT VIDEO DSKTP THEME

Diablo demo
Action, RPG game for Win 95
REVIEW PATCH CHEAT HINT VIDEO DSKTP THEME

FIFA '99 demo
Feel the pressure and pain of club soccer. Player head tracking, in-stadium lighting, night games, and improved player animations bring FIFA '99 to life.
Sports game for Win 95
REVIEW VIDEO

Formula 1 demo
Sims game for Win 95
REVIEW PATCH VIDEO

Grand Prix Legends demo
An accurate and compelling racing sim with cars slideing, drifting, bouncing and skidding with frightening realism.
Sims game for Win 95
REVIEW VIDEO

Grim Fandango demo
A mysterious adventure spanning the four-year search for redemption by Manny Calavera, a travel agent in the Land Of The Dead.
Adventure game for Win 95
REVIEW PATCH WALKTHRU VIDEO

NEXT PAGE
GO TO PAGE: 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11 12 13 14 15 16 17 18 19 20 21 22 23 24 25 26 27 28 29 30 31 32 33 34 35 36 37 38 39 40 41 42 43 44 45 46 47 48 49 50 51 52

Reviews

HALF-LIFE
Our Rating
Anders Rating
N/A
play video
RETURN TO THE INDEX
Half-Life GAME SUMMARY
Company:
Category:
Platform:
Half-Life GAME MENU
The Review:
What WE Say
Cheats & Hints:
Extras:
Print this review
CLICK TO ENLARGE SCREENSHOTS

REVIEW: Half-Life

While game makers have improved the graphics in 3-D first-person shooters during the years, few have been able to engineer similar significant advances in gameplay, artificial intelligence, and story elements. In fact, some recent titles have overreached their grasp with advances that proved detrimental to gameplay.

PROs	CONs
[illegible]	[illegible]

After 15 minutes of playing Half-Life, it's obvious that Sierra/Valve have solved this problem with panache. Believe the hype -- Half-Life is a masterpiece. There is an attention to detail here that I have never seen before, and a story that grabs you by the throat. From the very start, the game looks like a standard "run-and-gun" experience, but it sure doesn't feel like one. You soon realize that the story is evolving around you, things are happening, and you start to care a great deal about your character and his extremely unfortunate situation. Ah yes, let's talk about that situation.

Welcome to Black Mesa Laboratory. You portray Gordon Freeman -- a plucky, brave, and unlucky research fellow -- who arrives late for work on what seems like an average, dreary day. There is no opening movie. Instead we get a slow train ride through the underground complex with a computer voice tour-guide who gives you details about your environment.

[CONTINUED ON PAGE 2]

So what's your buzz? Tell us what you thought of the game, and your comments could wind up in The Buzz.

Videos

ALL every single one
VIDEOS
NEXT PAGE
A|B|C|D|E|F|G|H|I|J|K|L|M|N|O|P|Q|R|S|T|U|V|W|X|Y|Z|ALL
CONTROL PANEL
SEARCH FOR
Videos
IN CATEGORY
All Categories
FOR PLATFORM
All Platforms
SORT BY
○ Game Title
● GP Rating
CHANGE LIST COUNT TO
15
search

Blood video
Action game for Win 95, Win 3.X, DOS
REVIEW DEMO PATCH CHEAT DSKTP THEME

Chaos Island video
Strategy game for Win 95
REVIEW CHEAT

Commandos: Behind Enemy Lines video
A real-time tactical war game that puts you in command of a squad of elite Allied Commandos whose job is to complete 24 dangerous missions behind enemy lines.
Strategy game for Win 95
REVIEW DEMO CHEAT

Dark Reign: The Future Of War video
Strategy game for Win 95
REVIEW DEMO PATCH CHEAT HINT DSKTP THEME

Diablo video
Action, RPG game for Win 95
REVIEW DEMO PATCH CHEAT HINT DSKTP THEME

Formula 1 video
Sims game for Win 95
REVIEW DEMO PATCH

Grand Prix Legends video
An accurate and compelling racing sim with cars slideing, drifting, bouncing and skidding with frightening realism.
Sims game for Win 95
REVIEW DEMO

Grim Fandango video
A mysterious adventure spanning the four-year search for redemption by Manny Calavera, a travel agent in the Land Of The Dead.
Adventure game for Win 95
REVIEW DEMO PATCH WALKTHRU

Half-Life video
First-person action adventure. Where should you go? Who can you trust? Can you figure it out before they scrape you into a body bag?
Action game for Win 95
REVIEW DEMO PATCH CHEAT

Heroes Of Might And Magic III: The Restoration Of Erathia video
Not only is the third installment worthy of the Heroes name, it has everything that made the first two so great, plus enough brilliance to win over a whole new legion of fans.

NEXT PAGE
GO TO PAGE: 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11 12 13 14 15 16 17 18 19 20 21 22 23 24 25

STAY AHEAD OF THE GAME

GameWEEK Interview:

E^3's Founding Father

Pat Ferrell

He went from accountant to publisher of the most read videogame magazine, and then conceived and launched the Electronic Entertainment Expo

By Andy Eddy

Pat Ferrell is hardly a household name in the game industry. He doesn't inspire the same knowing look when names such as Shigeru Miyamoto, Nolan Bushnell, Howard Lincoln, Sid Meier or Bernie Stolar are mentioned; however, his contribution to the industry compares as favorably as any of the others' listed.

Ferrell is known as the co-founder of *GamePro* magazine. He also headed up *Infotainment World* for worldwide publisher IDG (International Data Group). *Infotainment World* comprised of *GamePro*, *PC Games* magazine (relaunched in 1993 as *Electronic Entertainment*, then after a series of name changes and reformatting, went back to *PC Games*, which was recently sold to Imagine Media) and a short-lived book division, in addition to other game-related products and services.

The biggest thing to come from Infotainment World was Ferrell's conception of an industry-specific show—the Electronic Entertainment Expo or, as we've all come to call it, E^3. Its creation was inspired by less-than-favorable treatment of the interactive-entertainment companies by the Consumer Electronics Show (CES), though the growth of the gaming industry was driving a sizable chunk of the traffic at the CES shows in the early-to-mid '90s.

Infotainment World eventually was divided into individually operating parts in late 1995—separated into three units overseeing *GamePro*, *PC Games* and trade-show organization—which was followed shortly thereafter by Ferrell's departure from the company. *GameWEEK* recently caught up with Ferrell to talk about how the show came about and find out what has happened since.

GameWEEK: What's your background that brought you to start GamePro?

Pat Ferrell: I had about a dozen years as controller/operations kind of guy with a CPA. I worked for companies like Visa and Foster Farms. Then I was the controller of Tengen, which was a division of Atari. They got into a scrap with Nintendo. I saw the need for a mainstream videogame magazine, so I launched *GamePro* in '88, sold it to IDG in 1989, and stayed on with them and built *Infotainment World*, which, of course, kind of ended up going into diverse product lines under the same industry. We had paperbacks, retail kiosks and custom publishing, etc.

GW: How did you come up with the concept of E^3?

PF: In January 1994, we went to the CES (Consumer Electronics Show) in Vegas, and everyone was completely disgruntled. We were out in the back, we had the mystery meat and the porta-potties. A couple of months after that show, CES had a meeting with the disgruntled videogame companies in San Francisco. I sent Debra Vernon to that meeting, and I told her, "There might be an opportunity here." There were a couple of guys at the time rattling about having a game show, but they weren't very serious players.

She came back and reported that the basic response from CES was, "We can't really improve. This show is foremost for our members and secondarily for other people that want to attend, and you guys qualify under the latter." I told Deb, "Let's go see if we can't pull the industry together to do our own show," and that's when we clandestinely started meeting with companies. In fact, over a period of a few months, I called on about 55 companies myself. The pitch was, "Let's lock arms and launch our own trade show"—even though I had never done a trade show before in my life. (laughs) At that time, we hooked up with our operations partner, and we did get an affirmative from several of the big players.

PC GAMES
SPECIAL HOLIDAY GIFT ISSUE!
30 GAME REVIEWS
SPECIAL COLLECTORS' 10TH ANNIVERSARY ISSUE!
GAMEPRO
SUPER SMASH BROS
OVER 65 GAMES!
Silent Hill
Street Fighter Alpha 3
The Future PLAYSTATION!

Two of Pat's magazine creations.

At the same time all that was going on, the IDSA was formed—the *Mortal Kombat* years—and the IDSA charter members were split on the trade-show issue. They knew they had to have their trade show, but there was Nintendo and Microsoft that wanted to go with CES, and basically the remainder of the players wanted to do their own thing; companies like Sony, Sega and Electronic Arts. At that point, the IDSA allowed for presentations to try to resolve the issue.

We basically won the presentation part of it , however Nintendo and Microsoft said they were still going to back CES, so it looked like there was going to be two shows. Strategically, then, we laid our dates on top of CES (laughs), which caused the problem that a company had to pick—there was no going to both—and that's when the PR war began. I'll give Bill White, then an executive vice president at Sega, credit for that one.

After that, it was a flat-out tug-of-war to see who would pull the most companies underneath their umbrella, and we won that war. By the time CES got up, they needed to make their deposit for Philadelphia—it was like a quarter of a million bucks—and it didn't look like they were going to get the quantity of companies. I think they had legitimately about 35 companies signed, and we had 96. That's when CES looked and said, "If we drop the money now, we're committed, even if we lose our shirt." They bowed out.

GW: How did you get word of that?

PF: I got a call from Gary Shapiro [president of CEMA, parent of the CES show], who said, "You guys win." The next two calls I got were from Nintendo and Microsoft.

GW: They were the last two holdouts?

PF: Yeah, they were the anchor tenants for CES, basically. There were other companies in the medium-to-small range that split, and people took different loyalties, depending on how close they were…for example, Squaresoft back Nintendo because of their close relationship. A lot of it depended on who you had relationships with who. At that time, Sega had come up as the market leader. Even though Nintendo was very, very powerful, Sega was equally powerful. Sony was just the scrappy new guy on the block. Having those two lock arms was formidable—I don't think I could have done it with just one of them. It had to be both.

What I've understood—through the rumor mill—is that CES called Nintendo and said, "We need an absolute 100% commitment from you before we pay this deposit." And Nintendo said, "We can't give that to you, we still have to see how this shakes out, but it doesn't look like you're winning right now." I think CES viewed that as a balk, and they did not want to go forward with the potential of Nintendo pulling out as well. That would have been catastrophic for them.

Microsoft, I believe, was just kind of following Nintendo's lead. At the time, Microsoft was a fairly low player; they didn't have a lot of product out. They hadn't come out to full bloom yet.

GW:* *After the Nintendo and Microsoft meetings, what happened after that?

PF: We said what we really wanted to do was put on a really fun...we knew there was some bad blood. We wanted to make sure we did everything possible so that by the time the show was over, everyone was happy. There were a lot of concerns about enough traffic in the West Hall, for example. We had a big South Hall. Even Sega and Sony wanted to make sure that Nintendo and Microsoft [who were relegated to booth space in the "secondary" West Hall because of their delay in committing to E^3] were happy. I think they really wanted to pull together. And the IDSA, in order for it to be a formidable organization, had to have those guys on the same page.

> "We wanted to make sure we did everything possible so that by the time the show was over, everyone was happy."
>
> Pat Ferrell on the first E^3

Even though they were fierce competitors, it was kind of interesting how they had an uncomfortable alliance. Sony and Sega, for example, encouraged us to do everything possible to make sure there was enough traffic in the West Hall. As we all remember, there were so many people there in that first year, that every inch of every hall was saturated for the entire length of the show. It was a wonderful, wonderful first-year event.

GW:* *What was the issue regarding contracts? Were you just given the first show, and then the basis was if things went well you'd get the next shows?

PF: What happened was, we owned the trademark, "we" being IDG. We owned the E^3 trademark. The IDSA felt very strongly that they had to own the trademark, because they knew they were going to own the show for 50 years or 100 years or whatever. So there was a negotiation between IDG and the IDSA that ultimately transferred the trademark over to the IDSA; i.e., transferred ownership. If you look at these shows, the only thing that has any value is the name. Everything else you rent—from the coffee pots to the space, you just rent. The real value is in the logo and the name. IDG knew that they had the backbone to put on a great show, they were well tied into the industry vis-à-vis Infotainment World, so the negotiations was more like, "Okay, we know we can do the job. Now give us the show for X number of years." I believe it ended up being ten-year deal in total, where IDG would manage and share in the profits. When I left, they renegotiated that as well, and I never saw that contract, so I don't know what that deal is.

GW:* *What was the response from the industry to the show?

PF: The first year was overwhelming. In fact, I remember saying to someone at the first show, "It's all downhill from here." (laughs) You knew that the pats on the back and the "Wow, this is fabulous. We should have done this a long time ago," were going to go away, and in Year 2 it was going to be, "My sandwiches weren't hot enough. My coffee is cold." I thought it was an overwhelmingly fun show.

The other thing was, because it was so new and a first event…Jesus, everybody had parties, everybody had all sorts of giveaways. The entertainment community embraced the entire show. The Japanese came over in droves. I remember one of my people coming up to me and saying that someone wanted to use our conference room at the show, and it ended up to be Steven Spielberg.

That said, I would bet that this year could be just as good as the first year, because it's going back to LA. I really believe that that town—if they do it right, if the PR people and the marketing people do it right—I would believe that LA would embrace that show again. It's a wonderful event for press. It's definitely the thing that people like to see on the six-o'clock news. Everything about it appeals to that venue. It's very easy, it's one flight from Asia. I just think there are so many pluses to it that I think what you'll see is a very robust show this year.

GW:* *Are you keeping in touch with it from the "outside" so you know what's going on in that realm and...?

PF: Nope. (big laugh) The closest I get to a video game is when I play with my kids. (laughing)

GW:* *How did you come to leave the industry?

PF: I came to a point where I realized it was time to do something else. I was intrigued by the Internet space, didn't know exactly what I wanted to do, but knew I needed to take some time off and think about it. Infotainment World was also at a point where it needed to be broken into smaller, more dynamic pieces. It got too big. It was just a combination of timing and where Infotainment World was at. I've always been the kind of guy to bounce from industry to industry, and now I'm thoroughly engrossed in the Internet space—and loving it here like I did in the videogame space when I was in there early on.

The Electronic Entertainment Expo

GW:* *What are you doing now?

PF: My co-founder and I founded a company called Socialnet. Socialnet has robust working products for the Internet, so you can use our products to very discreetly and carefully—it's a safe and secure way to meet people for tennis or golf or romance. We have a roommate service and professional networking, etc. We launched in February, we have over 30,000 registered members and we're growing very rapidly. It's at socialnet.com.

GW:* *Tell me, do you miss the gaming industry now?

PF: The truth is, no. (laughs) It's interesting that a lot of the gaming/entertainment people have populated the Internet industry. People like Bill White [previously at Sega and Nintendo, then Excite and now CMG Information Services] and Jack Heistand [formerly with Electronic Arts and IDSA, and helped build up Total Entertainment Network (TEN)]. So I still keep in touch with some of those guys.

GW

News Bits... News Bits... News Bits... News Bits... News Bits... News Bits... News Bits... News Bits...

3dfx: Voodoo^3 Tool Updated–3dfx Interactive has discovered a problem with the "Use higher quality but lower performance video" button in its 3dfx Tools for the recently released Voodoo^3 boards. The company has provided *GameWEEK* with an updated version in the form of a separate application, which has been approved for use by 3dfx's quality-assurance department. We've made it available on our GameDaily website at www.gamedaily.com/news/4_16/3dfxvidcfgApproved.exe.

Activision, THQ "Insider" Stock Sales–Activision and THQ each had stock sales by individuals close to the respective companies. Barry Plaga, Activision's chief financial officer, reportedly sold 32,986 shares of the company between March 19 and March 30, 1999, at prices between $12.67 and $13.17. The sale total ranges between $417,932.62 and $434,425.62. Lawrence Burstein, who is listed as a director of THQ, sold 5,000 shares on March 3, at a price of $21.25. His sale total was $106,250.

eUniverse to Snag Game Site–eUniverse recently announced that it has signed a letter of intent to acquire Case's Ladder, which focuses on the coordination of online gaming tournaments and events. Case's also hosts events for such sites as Yahoo Games, Microsoft Gaming Zone and Mplayer.

While the terms of the agreement weren't stated, the company's statement indicated that the deal was expected to be finalized by the end of April, and the transaction completed by mid-May. eUniverse provides a network of varied web sites, is also known as the "Motorcycle Centers of America, Inc. and trades Over The Counter under symbol MCAMD.

Maktos Makes Gaming Lingua Franca–The Maktos Translations web site started a new life, one that it hopes will expand the sharing of game news worldwide.

A good chunk of game product in North America is still driven by Japanese parent companies, with releases of new software and hardware often appearing in Japan first, then followed by release into other countries at a later date. While that may never change, Maktos was started as one game enthusiast's effort to bring Japanese gaming news to an English-speaking audience through careful translation from one language to the next.

The site has gone through a number of redesigns since its creation by Matt McDevitt as a Geocities community site this past December, and culminates with this week's appearance under its eponymous domain name. Its content well consists of translations of company web sites and newsgroup postings, which provides a wealth of information and opinion. It has also added content in the form of anime information (including song lyrics), translations of game manuals (to help buyers of import products get the full value out of their purchases), RealVideo streams of Japanese commercials and a message board for user posts.

Monolith Productions: A Little Engine that Can

Washington-based developer puts emphasis on games, then the business aspects

Allen Rausch

All companies have a character—a particular culture that distinguishes them from one another. It's this core of values that binds the organization together and influences everything it does. For example, much of Microsoft's character was set by Bill Gates' determination to control the world. Monolith Productions, on the other hand, has no desire to rule the world; instead, its character stems from the old-school style of its computer enthusiast founders. Monolith is driven by the desire to create cool stuff, impress its peers in the industry, and just have some fun along the way. In short, Monolith harks back to the halcyon days of Atari—when this industry was just a couple of hobbyists who happened to hit it big. The question is, Can that kind of laid-back entrepreneurial style survive in today's gaming industry of rapidly mainstreaming product, marketing and hit-driven mega-publishers, and non-gamers looking to cash in?

GAMES FIRST, BUSINESS SECOND

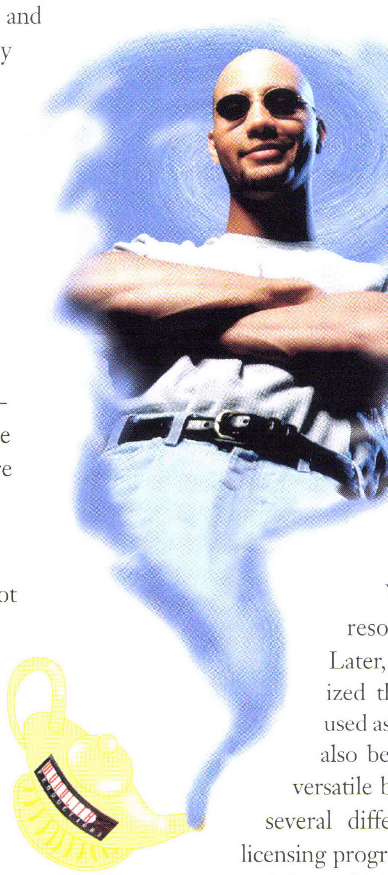
Much of Monolith's character stems from the personality of its iconoclastic 27-year-old founder and CEO, Jason Hall. Hall, a college dropout, ex-computer hacker, and phone phreaker, has the kind of eclectic "garage developer" type of resume that used to be *de rigeur* in this industry before the MBAs and marketing executives moved in. According to Hall, "I never really decided to enter the gaming industry, I had originally planned on being a stockbroker." Hall studied ten hours a day for the exam, eventually becoming a fully licensed broker at the age of 18. Unhappy as a stockbroker, he tried to become a full-time Marine, but after the enlisting, he ended up being assigned to reserve duty at a Naval Air base in Alameda. There he joined Brøderbund as a customer service rep, eventually getting promoted to a programmer.

The genesis of Monolith, however, came with Hall's move to Edmark, the Kirkland, Washington-based software company, notable for quality children's software. According to Hall, "Edmark was where I hooked up with the other five founding members of Monolith, the Monolith demo group." Initially, the group didn't come together for the purpose of creating games. "Don't get me wrong," Hall said, "all of us were hardcore gamers, and certainly games were one of the things that we wanted to work on. Our primary purpose in coming together, though, was to work with the newest, shiniest technology we could get our hands on and create really cool things."

At the time of Monolith's founding in 1994 the newest technology around was Microsoft's DirectX. "We ended up producing a CD of games, music and artwork just to let people know we were here and that we knew something about this DirectX stuff," Hall said. "All of a sudden, this huge contract to do the Microsoft *Windows 95 Game Sampler* drops in our laps." After the success of the *Sampler*, the young company found itself awash in project offers.

"We now had the money really to make a go of Monolith, "Hall said, "so we had to decide right at the company's inception what kind of a company we wanted this to be." The first decision was that the company would grow slowly, "It's vitally important that everyone who joins this organization shares its core values. Monolith believes in fostering the creative spirit, and we want everyone to be part of the development process." According to Hall, that means that not only should everyone be good at their primary jobs, but also they need to have a passion for games and technology. He describes the company's founders as "a circle of friends" and stresses that company expansion should never compromise that core.

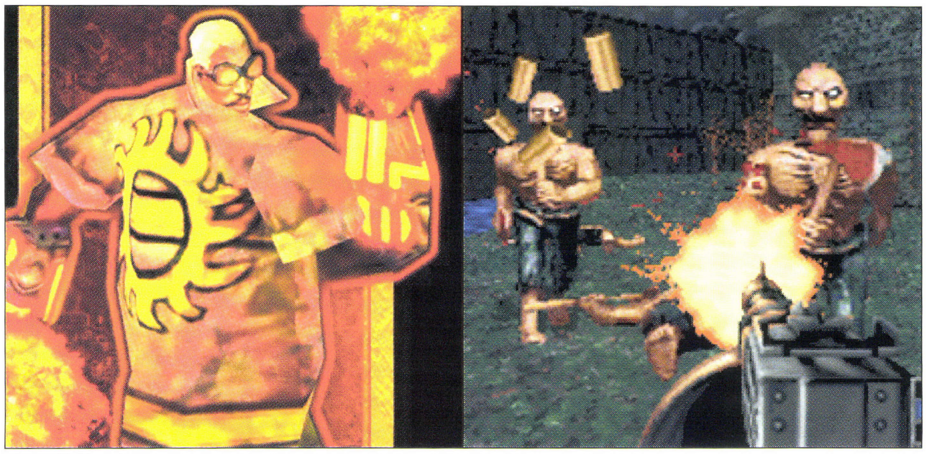
When questioned about company specifics, Hall was dismissive of any characterization of the company as a group of high-minded "artists." "Don't forget that my first job was a stockbroker, the kind of job where you don't survive more than a week if you've got your head in the clouds," Hall said. "However, it's a central element of Monolith's vision that business success follows artistic brilliance, not vice versa." Hall then took pains to point the credentials of many of the company's employees. Many were key players for well-known software companies, such as Brøderbund, Edmark, Sierra, Kesmai, 3DRealms, and Squaresoft.



Monolith CEO & Founder Jason Hall

THEY KNOW IT CAN

Key to future business plans is Monolith' own proprietary LithTech Engine. Hall explains, "…the engine division is an example of Monolith employees working on their passions, and those passions becoming key elements of Monolith's growth." Paul Butterfield, Monolith's PR Director, elaborates, "We began working on our Anime-inspired first-person shooter *Shogo: Mobile Armor Division* and made the decision to create our own engine."



Two of Monolith's Games:* Sanity *(left) and* Blood II: The Chosen *(right).

"There were a couple of reasons for this," Butterfield continued. "First, there just wasn't an engine out there that was flexible enough for what we needed. Second, every developer will always create their own engine if they have the chance. Third, we had a cadre of programmers who were more interested in creating engines and cool development tools than actual games. We had the time and the resources, so we went for it. Later, as we began work, we realized that not only could *Shogo* be used as a showcase for LithTech, but also because the engine was such a versatile build, it would be suitable for several different types of games. The licensing program grew out of that."

The LithTech engine itself is a true 3D game engine operating system developed by Monolith under the supervision of Microsoft. A quick overview of the engine boasts a number of outstanding features including the ability to build 3D games from virtually any perspective, utilize state-of-the-art motion capture and complex 3D models, incorporate dynamic music, and create fully networked gaming products. However, the LithTech engine's features are shared by a number of other higher profile engines, most notably the *Quake II* and *Unreal* engines.

The LithTech program license comes with an API set, level editors, model editors, conversion utilities, sample code, customer technical support and regular updates. What makes LithTech unique, however, is the engine's cost, the licensing fee is $250,000 per product with no royalties assuming a commercially sold end product. When compared with the million dollar licensing fee commanded by other engines, it's easy to see one of its major attractions. Unfortunately, being so much less expensive than other engines can carry its own stigma, the idea that the LithTech engine is somehow second best or bargain basement technology, an idea that both Monolith and its licensees work vigorously to deny.

"(The LithTech Engine) does cost less than the other top engines out there," Butterfield said. "For one thing, we know that we're the 'new engine on the block'. Our cost derives from several factors. First, we bear part the cost burden of continuing research and development, since we're continuing to use the engine for upcoming games like *Sanity* and others soon to be announced. We also researched the market and the price and features of competing engines and then decided to price not in relation to what other people were charging, but by what would allow us to make a thriving and competitive business out of licensing the engine."

Butterfield continued, "We have many features that set us apart from the other engines, just like they have different features than us, but I think there are a few points that truly separate us from the rest. Having a D3D renderer that works on almost 90% of the cards out there really helps to show off the hardware mode, but overall the big advantage of the engine is versatility and being very modular. The engine and the game are completely separate. This is very important for developers looking to make a new game and not just change and hack apart *Shogo* or *Blood 2* Giving the developer an engine and not an engine attached to a game was one of our most important goals from the beginning of the development process.”

The result of the LithTech program is self-evident, Hall says. The company developed a solid business model, but it also gets to work with and supply useful tools to other developers, following its mandate to “make cool stuff.” The LithTech program also helped the company develop an organizational model. Monolith has now become two solid game development teams along with a separate engine team led by programmer Mike Dussault.

OVER THE TOP

Interestingly, four years after the company’s founding, the company is just now coming together as a real cohesive unit. Monolith has had a number of successful and not so successful games hit the market including the aforementioned *Shogo:MAD*, the sleeper hit *Blood* and the critical disappointment *Blood II*. Hall himself is brutally honest about evaluating his company’s performance. According to him, “…learning from your mistakes is the only way to get better,” and he has nothing but disdain for companies that try to sweep failure under the rug.

“Let’s face it, “ Hall says, “like everyone else in this business, we’re going to have fantastic games and games that are not quite as fantastic. That’s the price you pay when you go try to push the envelope every time out. The trick is to evaluate your disappointments and figure out what went wrong. Then (and this is where a lot of companies fall down) incorporate that knowledge into your development process.” An example of this “learn as you go” process was the release of *Shogo: Mobile Armor Division*.

Shogo was an extremely important release for Monolith. It was the showcase title for the LithTech engine, it was the company’s fourth quarter holiday linchpin and it was a self-published title (Monolith also has a publishing and distribution deal in place with GT Interactive). When the title was release at first, it seemed as though everything had gone perfectly. “We honestly felt that (Shogo) was ready to launch.” Butterfield said, “Then after the release, the Internet newsgroups were suddenly abuzz with complaints about the quality of the game’s artificial intelligence.” Indeed, according to some early postings, many of the game’s enemies would just stand and let gamers pound them without even trying to fight back.

“That’s when we jumped into action,” Hall said. However, rather than trying to cover the gaffe with public relations doubletalk and damage control, the company admitted online that it had made an error and made the improvement of the game’s AI—a top priority in the quickly released patch. The gambit paid off, Shogo was a success and a potential PR disaster turned into a coup for the company.

“We learned a lot from the release of Shogo,” Hall said, “We learned our way around publishing and how to deal with retailers and our customers, we re-evaluated our QA process and have incorporated that experience into our collective.” Hall stresses, however, that the reason it turned out so well was not because of any slick moves on Monolith’s part, but because their reaction to the crisis was fueled by their core values.

“We were committed to the success of Shogo the way we are to all our products. “Hall says, “It was never an issue of money, we’re in this business because we love it, and all of our products need to show that love.” Art and commerce are frequently painted as incompatible in this industry. Monolith is a company to watch if only to see whether the two can truly exist together. *GW*

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Grappling with Success

Wrestling titles drive triple digit growth in the category

By Paul Palumbo

In the span of three short years, wrestling titles have come to dominate the "fighting" category on console platforms, led by the popularity of both WWF and WCW licenses that have turned golden for publishers. In 1996, wrestling games made up a mere 10% of the fighting category. In 1997, that figure grew to 33%, based on sell-through units (see table below), and in 1998, the comparable figure spiked up to 68% of pieces sold.

Total unit sales in the category are up 272% in a year-over-year comparison between 1997 and 1998. Dollars in the segment rose from $215 million in 1997 to $438 million in 1998 (based on NPD Group numbers), a 200% rise. Wrestling titles accounted for two out of the top ten selling games in the category in 1997, but a surprising six out of ten in 1998, primarily on the strength of THQ's WCW franchise. That license has generated millions of dollars in revenue for the company and a lot of investor attention. The company has really nailed the genre.

Today, wrestling is more like a mass-market spectator sport with primetime TV specials; high profile Pay-per-view events; and a bunch of "Hollywood" stars, except these characters typically have their own distinctive signature moves and clever "taunts" that kids know and love. Wrestling is everywhere. A former wrestling star, Jesse Ventura, was even elected governor of Minnesota. That's visibility. Wrestling is more like fun and games, which is why it has translated so well as an interactive product license.

It's somewhat of a double-edged sword for publishers, however, because while these licenses might have been cheaper to acquire several years ago when compared to NFL, NBA and NHL properties, that is certainly not the case today. There is a lot more competition for these licenses, and that means rights holders can command a significant up front (seven-to-eight figures) plus a nice back end guarantee to secure a wrestling license nowadays. Next year, Electronic Arts will own the WCW license, and THQ will assume the WWF license currently held by Acclaim Entertainment until November.

> Total unit sales in the category are up 272% in a year-over-year comparison between 1997 and 1998. Dollars in the segment rose from $215 million in 1997 to $438 million in 1998…, a 200% rise.

WRESTLING DOWN MILLION UNIT SALES

What's happened to wrestling over the past several years (and THQ has been the beneficiary of this with its WCW license) is that TBS really made the sport into a Hollywood-like production. The network has driven up awareness of numerous personalities, from Hollywood Hulk Hogan to Neil Sting and others. Plus, there has been the occasional celebrity entering the ring—namely, basketball star Dennis Rodman and pro-football player Kevin Greene—which guaranteed to add even more spectacle to the drama. And drama it is.

Wrestling organizations have actually "come clean" and admitted that what is being staged is exactly that, a staged act. Scriptwriters for these events are able to talk shop about it and even suggest that WCW and WWF writing is comparable to modern day Shakespeare. That might be presumptuous, but it's also a lot of fun. Take together, wrestling products that sold 300,000-400,000 pieces two years ago sold 1,000,000 + pieces in 1998.

Technology has also come a long way. "The old 8-bit and 16-bit wrestling titles are nothing like those today. Players could only lumber along like stiff robots," says James Lin, an analyst with Wedbush Morgan Securities. "It was hard to design in signature moves. With improved art, technology and graphics, Hulk Hogan can actually perform his moves. There is an improved sense of realism that is helping to drive sales."

THQ MADE GOOD GAMES AT THE RIGHT TIME

THQ has done a great job with the WCW license, but the company also got into the category before the true size of the market was revealed. "When THQ went into the wrestling category, Acclaim had the WWF license and had done very well with it. And, in considering any of the other sports franchises, THQ would have been competing with established brands in a very crowded market," says Allison Locke, senior vice president of sales and marketing at THQ. "THQ saw a significant market opportunity when the exclusive rights for the WCW franchise became available. As it turns out, wrestling now rivals the major sports leagues."

TV AND CHANNEL MARKETING

The exposure from TV (Monday Night Nitro and Thursday Thunder) gives THQ an opportunity to buy media time against those shows, which hits at the heart of the game player demo. "TV spending is something that can push a console product from 500,000 pieces to 800,000 pieces," noted Locke. "That made THQ really bump up the TV support for its wrestling titles." For WCW/nWo Revenge, THQ allocated multiple millions on TV promotion and the title is projected to have sold north of 1 million units. According to Locke, channel marketing is the next most important element to our product launches for our wrestling titles. The company runs ads and/or pre-sell events with all the retailers, and collaborates with each account on what works best in their specific environment. "Because of the demographics of the genre, as well as where we are in the hardware life cycle, wrestling does very well in the mass merchants, especially over the full life of the product," states Locke. THQ also focuses on PR events using the wrestling stars and in the consumer magazines.

THQ appears to be in the right place at the right time again with the WWF license. The wrestling organization has done a great job exploiting a little more of the "hardcore" aspect of the sport, with busty women and just plain more raunchiness. It's translated into TV viewership (i.e., ratings) that has outpaced that of WCW. WWF airs on USA Networks, and WCW on TBS. What THQ has done very well is pick up the flavor of the sport that appeals to the wrestling fan and weave that into the game with enough UI simplicity that the moves can be executed with a game pad and joystick. That said, it might be hard to duplicate the last couple years' growth going into 2000 and beyond.

THQ will certainly do a good job with the WWF license, and EA a great job with WCW. But, unless EA sells two-million copies of WCW Mayhem, there will only be a small improvement over what THQ did with the franchise, and that means incremental growth for the segment. **GW**

Top Ten Best Selling Video Game Fighting Titles

Ranked by Units Sold—1997

Rank	Title	Platform	Publisher	Projected Unit range	Avg. retail Price
1	WCW vs. nWo: World Tour	N64	THQ	425,000	$61.00
2	Tekken 2	PlayStation	Namco	375,000	$46.00
3	WCW vs. The World	PlayStation	THQ	375,000	$38.00
4	Soul Blade	PlayStation	Namco	225,000	$46.00
5	Tekken	PlayStation	Namco	225,000	$20.00
6	Bushido Blade	PlayStation	Squaresoft	225,000	$37.00
7	MK Mythology: Sub-Zero	PlayStation	Midway	175,000	$46.00
8	MK Trilogy	N64	Midway	175,000	$69.00
9	Killer Instinct Gold	N64	Nintendo	175,000	$70.00
10	Street Fighter Ex Plus	PlayStation	Capcom	125,000	$43.00
				2,500,000	*$47.60*

Top Ten Best Selling Video Game Fighting Titles

Ranked by Units Sold—1998

Rank	Title	Platform	Publisher	Projected Unit range	Avg. retail Price
1	WCW/nWo Revenge	N64	THQ	1,000,000	$60
2	WWF Warzone	PlayStation	Acclaim	1,000,000	$42
3	Tekken 3	PlayStation	Namco	1,000,000	$44
4	WCW Nitro	PlayStation	THQ	725,000	$43
5	WWF Warzone	N64	Acclaim	725,000	$60
6	WCW vs. nWo: World Tour	N64	THQ	675,000	$53
7	WCW vs. The World	PlayStation	THQ	525,000	$23
8	Tekken 2	PlayStation	Namco	375,000	$24
9	Mortal Kombat 4	PlayStation	Midway	375,000	$44
10	Mortal Kombat 4	N64	Midway	375,000	$51
				6,775,000	*$44.40*

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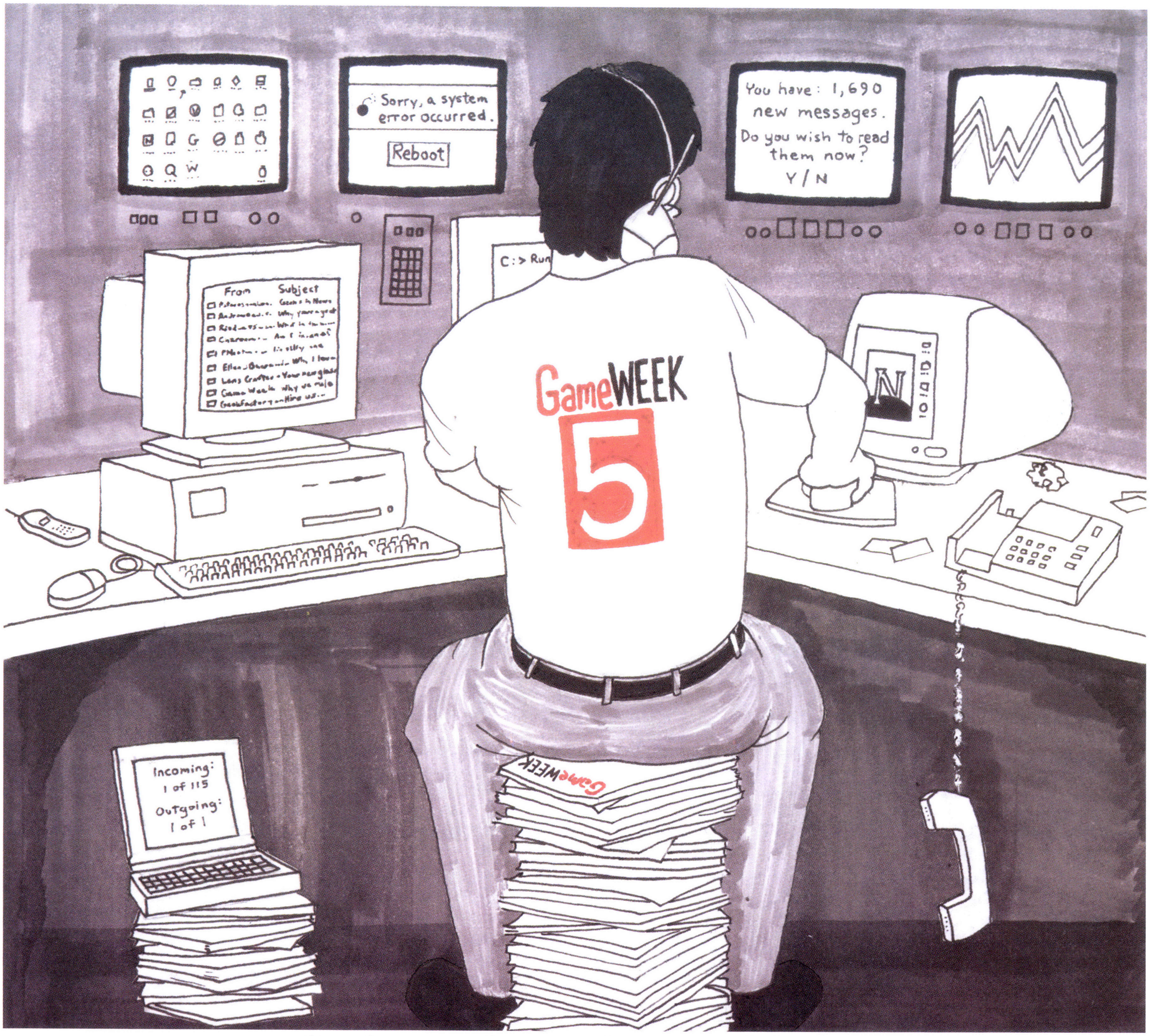
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How to Get a Job in the Game Industry

Big-game job hunting in the new millennium

By Ed Ochs

We are all job seekers at one time or another, and there are many ways to find a job—not just one. Not many have the gift of knowing someone, a friend willing to pull them into a job in the interactive entertainment industry—perhaps even without a resume. Yet having and making contacts are a vital part of the overall search, for sooner or later, someone—a human resources director, manager, recruiter, screener or staff—will have to get to know you well enough to hire you.

Though it seems like computers have taken over the world, it is still a 'people business,' and your ability to get along with others—not solely your qualifications—is going to make the difference between you getting the job or someone else.

Of course, everybody's different. Some beginners, with little real industry experience, learn the required skills from a friend or parent and then polish them through trail and error. Other people acquire job-hunting skills from frequently having to look for work—for one reason or another, mostly through no fault of their own. Yet others actually have a real talent for finding work, and are able to leap from job to job without getting their shoes wet, as if each new job came to them with an open round-trip ticket back to their old job or ahead to their next job.

Whether you've arrived at the point in your life where you've made a serious decision to seek your first job in the game industry or, after years of job hopping your survival instincts are as finely tuned as a Michael Jordan jump-shot, it's still very important to be running at least half a step ahead of the crowd.

If you don't have a resume, it's time to put one together. If you do have a resume, it never hurts to dust it off and keep it up-to-date—and in circulation, just in case. The interactive entertainment job market is a constant carousel; you're either jumping on or falling off, and you never know when the carousel may stop spinning. The trick is to stay on the pony for a nice, long ride.

You don't have to be an expert in the stock market to know the computer/videogame industry is a hot market for cool jobs. But if you're really serious about carving out a career in gaming, take a moment to listen to the voices of the industry collected here; this special section can help you find that job you're looking for or, at the very least, point you in the right direction. This could be the ticket; all you have to add is the missing ingredient. With a nod to Rod Serling and Bill Gates, that's why the signpost on the road ahead reads: "Wanted: Serious Players Only." *GJ*

The Importance of Looking at the Big Picture

Targeting the jobs that are in demand

By Ed Ochs

It seems simple enough: Individuals are looking for the right job, and game companies are looking for the right individuals. But there's a lot more to the equation than connecting candidates and companies. Human resources directors, company managers and industry recruiters have major concerns that play a large part in their decision-making process, and even if they're never discussed in an interview with a new candidate, job seekers should make themselves aware of these 'Big Picture' issues when sizing up potential companies and positions, both from their point of view and the company's.

WHERE THE JOBS ARE

When looking for a job in the interactive entertainment industry, it's certainly important to know where today's jobs are, but it might be even more important to know what tomorrow's jobs are today—bettering your chances for landing a secure position in the videogames business.

As more artists, animators and programmers compete for positions, other equally important positions remain more difficult to fill, and consequently the hiring opportunities increase dramatically for those with the foresight to gauge the growth areas and ride in the next wave.

"While it's not too difficult to find graphics programmers," says Scott Herrington, public relations/marketing director/webmaster (and all-around nice guy) for game developer Shiny Entertainment, "finding outstanding AI programmers, tool programmers or other 'specialty' programmers is a real pain. That's probably because the graphic programmers are the ones who usually get all the name recognition and 'fame' (sure, it's limited to the industry, but it's still some sort of fame). But those other guys can make or break a game just as easily."

"People with 3D skills will be in huge demand," predicts industry analyst David Cole of DFC Intelligence. "Also, as technology gets better and better and systems get more realistic, the demand for great artists will get stronger. As a cautionary note, people that are good, not great, artists will probably struggle more because as the processing power increases it will be easier to tell where someone cut corners on art."

Barbara Walter of Walter & Company, a San Diego-based recruiter for the game industry, is asked to fill all occupations for her various clients, who are both large and small game development/publishing companies throughout the U.S. "Most of the time they ask for game programmers or tools programmers who have at least one published game title and at least three years of game industry experience," she says.

"Occasionally they waive the 'one published game title' requirement for a specific skill, i.e., network programmer. Artists openings are next in demand, then producers and managers. I am rarely given a search assignment for a game sound designer/composer or administrator."

ARE YOU EXPERIENCED?

In the classic tug-of-war between the need for experienced employees vs. industry newcomers, game companies are looking to hire people who can make a difference now vs. later, regardless of hours or years logged in the business.

"Realize that making games is a business," says Shiny's Herrington. "We, like every other company on the planet, are out to make money. We look at you [the job candidate] as an investment. If I invest $80,000 a year in this artist/programmer/animator/etc., will that investment be profitable for the company? Would investing $60,000 in a competing artist yield the same quality artwork, which would increase our net revenue?"

Says Monica Malone, HR director for Eidos Interactive, "I suppose the main concern that I have about today's job market is competition among high-tech companies for quality, experienced candidates, not only for the software/hardware jobs, but also for marketing, accounting, sales etc. Everyone wants people with experience in their particular industry, and I don't think we are any different in gaming."

Christine Cicchi, a recruiter for Sierra, agrees. "Due to the gaming industry becoming driven toward new technology and becoming increasingly competitive, finding qualified and experienced candidates that answer our long-term needs is more difficult than ever before.

"For example," says Cicchi, "when hiring a 3D artist, we tend to focus on a candidate who has a well-rounded background: 2D illustration/conceptual skills, 3D modeling/texturing/animation abilities, gaming experience and/or movie experience. This allows us to leap forward in the gaming market.

"So when we interview candidates,

(continued on page 68)

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Knocking on Doors...Going through the Net

Technology makes candidates tasks much easier

by Ed Ochs

Oh how the Internet has turned the world upside down! The world has gone from knocking on doors for jobs to clicking on job pages, from paper resumes to paperless, from telephone and fax to digital transmission. It's a whole new electronic ballgame.

While the Internet has become another name for gold on Wall Street, it has also become another name for global employment hotline on Main Street, as more and more game-biz job applicants are making first contact with prospective employers via email and through industry websites—from all over the world.

"We probably get about 80% of our 'non-recruiter' applicants through the Internet," says Scott Herrington, webmaster, PR and marketing director for Shiny Entertainment. "The Internet has probably become one of the more important ways for us to find new talent. We receive more initial inquiries through the Internet than straight phone calls or unsolicited mail.

"By having our openings posted 24/7 to applicants around the world, we greatly expand the pool of talent that we can draw from. The candidates get to check our products and company out before sending in their resume, and we're also able to give them more information about the openings prior to their submission. They can really tailor their resume to meet our needs."

"Our website has been key in recruiting new personnel," says Dara-Lynn Pelechatz, director of recruiting and operations for Stainless Steel Studios. "By its nature this a highly technical business with very techno-savvy personnel. Any game company without a significant online presence is insane."

> Applying for a job in the game industry in 1999 couldn't be easier or faster. With the flick of the wrist, applicant resumes are sent and company acknowledgment received.

Like most game companies, Capcom uses a variety of recruiting methods such as the Internet, newspaper and industry magazine ads, as well as recruiting booths at industry shows. "The number one source of quality candidates by far," says Heather Tarpy, Capcom's senior human resources rep, "are received from Capcom's website recruiting online address. This is the most focused source for experienced programmers, artists, project managers, marketing, sales, accounting/finance, etc. candidates to inquire about making a big jump within the game industry. The Internet also gives talented candidates that may not yet have been able to break into the industry a chance to express their interests."

"The Internet definitely plays a primary role in recruiting for us," says Page Morris, HR director for Activision. "We receive several hundred resumes a week through the website."

Effective this July, Electronic Arts' employment websites will be totally revamped, says Rusty Rueff, senior vice president of human resources at Electronic Arts. "We have acquired some very cool new technology called e-recruiter that will allow you to register with EA online. It's just like having a recruiter on your side, except this will now be done online.

"Once you have confidentially registered and indicated the job you want, "says Rueff, "the system will compare with every job opening in EA around the world. If there is a match, you will be notified immediately online. You will then have the chance to review the job posting and let us know if you are interested. Assuming there is interest on your part, the system will send you specific questions about the job. People who successfully pass will then have their resume electronically delivered right to the hiring manager's email inbox for further evaluation.

"We are very excited about e-recruiter, as this will be a big part of our recruiting strategies going forward."

"For us," says Shiny's Herrington, "using the Internet really doesn't have any drawbacks. I can't think of any person we'd hire that doesn't already have Internet access. Maybe if we were looking for traditional artists, we might think differently. Without the website job board we maintain, I doubt that we would have gotten some of the amazing talent from overseas that we've been lucky enough to hire."

Online connections may yet replace the telephone as the primary vehicle of inquiry, but for busy HR directors, websites have emerged as a godsend in the form of convenient one-stops for attracting and screening applicants who might otherwise be clogging switchboards and papering in-boxes. And since space is no concern, there are a million and one things companies can include in a website. In addition to a company profile and products, they can post as much or as little information about each open position.

"We have greatly reduced our cost per hire by posting jobs on our website," says Monica Malone, HR director for Eidos Interactive. "We have tried to make it as easy as possible for applicants to submit resumes."

Applying for a job in the game industry in 1999 couldn't be easier or faster. With the flick of the wrist, applicant resumes are sent and company acknowledgment received. From that point on, traditional hiring practices take over—no holograms, no video interviews—and the telephone becomes the next link in the chain that can lead to an interview—person to person—and hopefully a job.

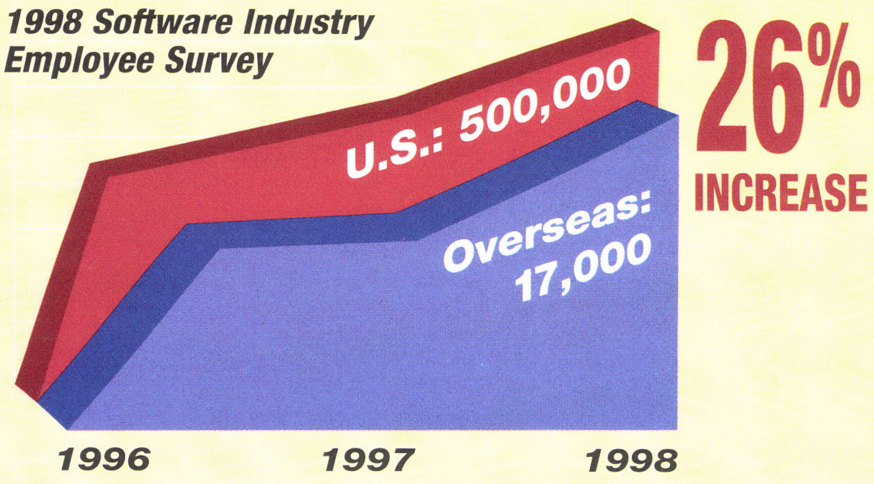
For many, it all begins online. **GJ**

Game Industry as Employer—a 26% Annual Growth Rate

Today, 25 years after the introduction of the first game, *Pong*, the interactive entertainment software industry has become a major player on America's economic scene.

According to a 1998 IDSA report, "The State of the Entertainment Software Industry," the entertainment software industry in 1997 directly employed nearly 50,000 U.S. workers, many in highly skilled positions. Another 17,000 were employed abroad.

The average company responding to the survey increased its employee base in 1997 by more than 18% from the previous two years, with employment growing at an annual rate of 26% (compared to a 2.5% decrease in employment among Fortune 500 companies).



At the same time, tens of thousands of jobs in industries as diverse as retail and distribution, electronics manufacturing and the communications and film businesses are indirectly tied to interactive entertainment software.

Figures for 1998 are not yet available.

Source: IDSA, Coopers & Lybrand

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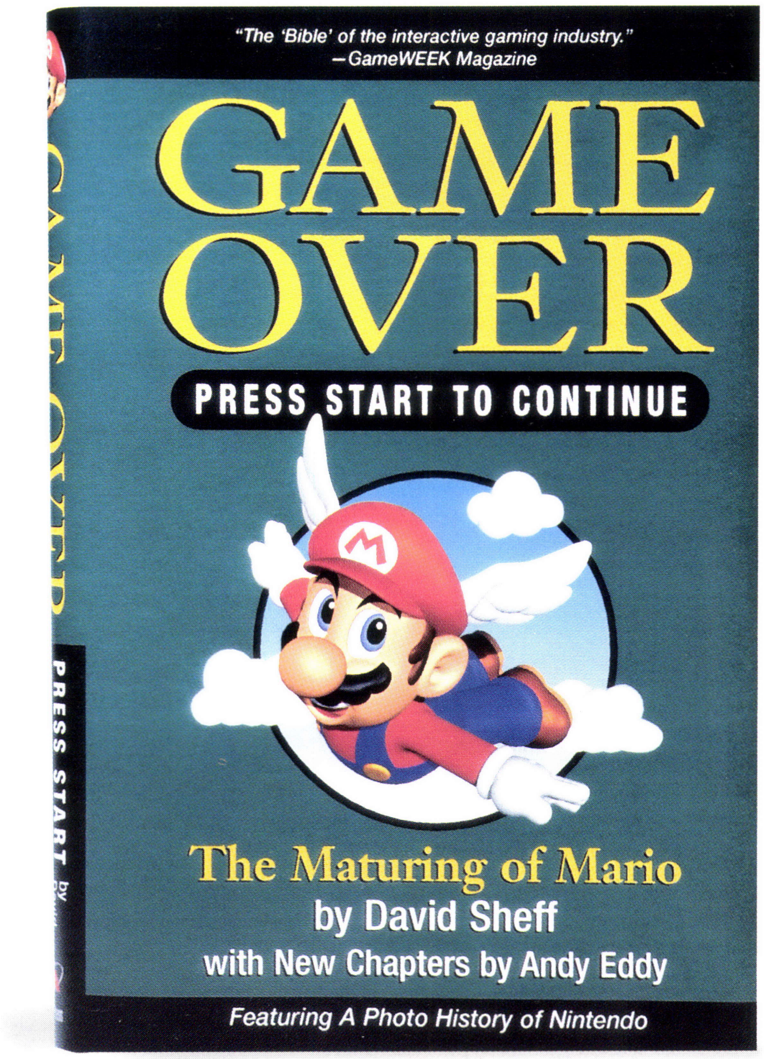
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“It Was Calling My Name”

Scott Lahman, vice president of production for Activision Studios, describes his pathway from the film Business in New York into the game industry.

By Ed Ochs

I grew up with an eye toward the entertainment business, which, in the 1980s, really seemed (to me, anyway) to encompass movies, television and publishing. While growing up I spent (invested) an enormous amount of time and energy playing video and computer games, and it never really occurred to me that there was a possibility of actually working in that business.

When I graduated from college in 1991, I took a job with a film company, Tribeca Productions, in New York City. It was a great job, working in a great city, for a great company (Tribeca is run by Robert De Niro and his partner Jane Rosenthal), and I initially found it very exciting. To my surprise, however, I started to tire of the film industry after only two years, and I really started to question my commitment to pursuing further advancement. Jane could tell that my tank was empty, and we agreed it was time for me to move on.

Fortunately, this was 1993, and “Siliwood” stories were everywhere. Everybody was starting interactive companies and divisions, and all of this press coverage had rekindled my passion for games and planted the seed of a possible career change. During my last weeks at Tribeca, Jane asked what I was thinking of doing, and I told her that “interactive entertainment is calling my name.” Her response—“let’s create Tribeca Interactive.” I ended up staying and working with a small group she had assembled to tap into this burgeoning industry.

> *When I graduated from college in 1991, I took a job with a film company, Tribeca Productions, in New York City. It was a great job, working in a great city, for a great company…*

We spent six months getting to know the players, traveling to shows, announcing our presence, signing up the team and getting everything set.

And then, I met Bobby Kotick.

Bobby was taking Activision through the second stage of his plan, and when he told me what he was thinking, I knew I had to be a part of it. Fortunately, Bobby was not limiting his hiring to those with a lot of game industry experience, and he was particularly interested in those who had movie development experience. He introduced me to Alan Gershenfeld, VP of Activision Studios, who made me an offer. Because I had been a big fan of Infocom and Activision, and because I believed in Activision’s name and heritage, I accepted the offer and conveyed the news to my colleagues at Tribeca. I moved to L.A. knowing it would a wild ride—and wild it has been. **GJ**

SPECIAL SECTION: *Game Quotes*

“I’ve yet to meet a person in the industry, who is successful and talented, that isn’t passionate about what he/she does. That’s probably the secret ingredient that can push a title from a four-star to a five-star game. The sheer passion, drive and determination to create something great is at the core of every Shiny employee. Loving games doesn’t hurt either.”

—Scott Herrington, Shiny Entertainment

“The latest and most important tool a candidate can have at any level, whether being an aspiring artist looking for a career in the game industry or a senior-level artist already in the gaming industry, is personal websites. What this does for him or her is invaluable. Once they are ready to send out resumes for an artist position, they will be able to put their websites address directly on their resume. This allows potential employers to view samples of their artwork without sending out a bulky portfolio. This saves both the candidate and the company time. With the flood of resumes that are submitted for artists positions, having this tool puts the candidate instantaneously ahead of candidates missing this information.”

—Heather Tarpy, Capcom

“My style is to actually ‘agent’ the candidate and client together, which is not always an easy task. I pride myself on not finding a job that would create job hops, but actually create career moves for my candidates. We want all placements to be solid.”

—Pat Bigley,
Prime Candidates Inc.

“Education is pretty important, but it’s certainly not everything. Real-life experience counts for a lot more and the way you demonstrate it to us often times makes the difference.”

—Rusty Rueff, Electronic Arts

“Every employee we hire is a million dollar decision, so we take our time and make sure it’s the right thing for the company and for the candidate. Adding a new person to the Stainless Steel team is the responsibility of the whole company. Our hiring process requires a unanimous vote by every employee in the company. We do this because we’re building a world class team and we’re willing to take the time to do it right. Hiring the right people is more important than our schedule, our office or our equipment—it’s the most important investment our company can make.”

—Dara-Lynn Pelechatz,
Stainless Steel Studios.

“Things move so fast around here that there isn’t much time for an extended learning curve. I don’t know about perfect fits, but my recommendation to my managers is, when in doubt, don’t!”

—Monica Malone,
Eidos Interactive

“In the final analysis, the most important factor is the candidate’s reputation, what his or her former co-workers and bosses say about them. Reputation and intuition, i.e., gut feeling, are what cinch most hires.”

—Barbara Walter,
Walter & Company

“We try and get the perfect fit, but we’re also proactive on internship candidates.”

—Christine Cicchi, Sierra

“Our industry is always hiring in all areas of the country, so if you’re willing to relocate, you should have a job within two months—assuming you’ve done good work in your current position.”

—Paul Trowe, Gremlin Entertainment

“Our location in Charlottesville, Virginia provides us with qualified people from the University of Virginia. The area itself is also fairly high-tech. When we have a job opening, we post it internally to see if any employees are interested in the position or know someone who might be. We promote from within whenever possible and rely heavily on employee referrals. If we do not find a qualified pool of candidates after the posting, we advertise, primarily on the Internet. We sometimes use recruiters when seeking hard-to-find skills. When it is necessary to hire someone experienced in the game industry, we have difficulty finding people who are willing to leave large computer game centers such as Northern California to come to Virginia.”

—Martha Cooper, Kesmai Corporation

“Programmers with a tan frighten us! When do they have the time to go sit in the sun? We want ’em pale, out of shape, and with the thickest glasses known to man!”

—Scott Herrington,
Shiny Entertainment

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Turbine Entertainment Software is seeking talented people to help develop the world's best massively multi-player 3D online games. We are working with top publishers, including Microsoft and Sega of America, creating "**Asheron's Call**" for the MSN Gaming Zone and a groundbreaking game for Sega's Dreamcast, as well as future products for other top PC/console publishers.

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We are located on the high-tech Route 128 corridor in the Boston area.

3D GRAPHICS ENGINEER

- *Position*: Design and code cutting-edge hardware-accelerated graphics engines for both PC and console platforms.
- *Requirements*: Strong C background, hardware architectures & code optimization techniques, experience writing for Direct3D and/or other 3D APIs.
- Some C++ and Assembly experience.
- *Pluses*: Strong C++ background, Intel/RISC Assembly, linear algebra experience, and console programming experience. Must be comfortable working in a team-based setting.

BOX GRPAPP

TOOLS PROGRAMMER

- *Position*: Create content creation tools that assist in the use of our game engine.
- *Responsibilities will include*: designing of useful tools, design and programming of user interfaces, database tools, and helping define the low-level engine architecture and APIs. Person will be working with content teams and should be open to receiving "user feedback" on how to improve the tools and be willing to provide internal support for their use.
- *Requirements*: Strong C++/OOP skills, strong software engineering skills, and familiarity with UI design.
- *Pluses*: Win32 GUI programming and 3D geometry background.

BOX TPAPP

GEOMETRY ENGINEER

- *Position*: Work on cutting-edge real-time graphics engines.
- *Requirements*: Must have strong C++ and computational geometry background, interest and knowledge about real-time graphics engines, physics simulation, visibility culling algorithms, and other state of the art graphics techniques.

BOX GEAPP

PRODUCER

- *Position*: Manage development of one of our next AAA multiplayer game titles.
- *Requirements*: Must posses excellent skills in communication and organization, and in the time-management of others. Should work well in collaborative team-based structures, and have an eye for detail. Game industry experience is essential, avid multiplayer gamers preferred. Must have proven yourself capable of shipping quality products on-time and on-budget.

BOX PRJAPP

USER - INTERFACE ARTIST

- *Position*: Build complex and dynamic user interfaces for AAA game titles.
- *Requirements*: Must posses excellent 2D and 3D design skills, fluency in latest computer design packages and practices, and an understanding of visual communication principles. Must have experience building user interfaces, preferably for games. Applications must include portfolio or demo reel.
- *Pluses*: 3D modeling and texturing experience are a plus, but not a requirement. Industry experience a strong plus.

BOX UIAAPP

LEVEL DESIGNER / LANDSCAPE BUILDER

- *Position*: Experienced level designer needed to design and create landscapes, levels, and buildings for a real time 3D environment. Responsibilities will include working closely with game designers and art teams to determine design goals and look and feel.
- *Requirements*: Must have previous level-design experience, excellent low-polygon modeling skills, and familiarity with latest graphic tools. Must be able to learn proprietary tools quickly and work with a complex pipeline. Must be comfortable working in a team-based environment in addition to following art direction. Applications must be accompanied by portfolio or demo reel.
- *Pluses*: Architectural experience and Industry experience on quality titles a strong plus.

BOX LDLAPP

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www.TurbineJobs.com.

Top 10 Do's and Don'ts for GameJob Hunters

According to industry HR directors responding to a GameWEEK survey

1 Build a resume that outlines the skills, abilities and qualities you feel your potential employer needs to know about you. Direct your resume to the position you're applying for and why you are perfect for the job. Custom-tailor each resume you send out to the company to which you are sending it and the job you are seeking. If you're responding via email, always send your resume with a job code on it. Send non-returnable samples of your work to 'illustrate' your resume. Remember to spell check your resume.

2 Compose a cover letter with your current goals and how they would best fit in our industry. Be specific. Product knowledge is always a great attribute. So is a brief cover letter.

3 From the very first phone call to the last interview, show you're "excited about working for us" and "have lots of energy." HR personnel look for people "who will take work and success of the company seriously."

4 First interview musts—all the usual: "promptness, neatness, clarity, courtesy and a good handshake." On truthfulness: "Just tell me the truth about bad work experiences and negative aspects about a previous job. I'll find out anyway." Extra credit: "People who have done a little research about our company or the position get some brownie points." Second interview: "I expect the candidate to have well thought-out questions about the position and/or the company, and a continued enthusiasm about the position."

5 Be aware of the intangibles your potential employer is looking for "between the lines" that may impact their hiring decision. For example: How long has the candidate been at each position? This reflects a level of dedication. Also a big plus: An education.

6 If you use a company's website to make initial contact, make sure you fulfill all the online requirements before you submit your resume or it may never leave your computer. It doesn't hurt to follow up with a 'hard copy' of your resume, cover letter and non-returnable samples of your work. Studying a company's website is a great way to research a company's history and products.

7 Express your ability to work well with others and your desire to be part of a team. "Our artists are equally adept at creating characters and worlds on their own, or taking another person's ideas and transforming them into reality. Not everyone gets to play art/creative director. That's a quality we look for in every artist we interview."

8 If you're an artist seeking a job with a developer, you can speed up the process by identifying your strengths: Is your strength in animation, graphical interface, 3D modeling, texture mapping, etc.? Always submit a copy of a non-return portfolio with your resume, showing a variety of your work. Make sure your demo reel looks as good as or better than the work the company to which you're applying is already doing. "Look at some of the online artists sites/resumes and company websites for examples of digital art. Compare it to your own work. When comparing, be as objective as possible: Would you hire yourself or the other guy?" The preferred format is VHS tape, but traditional paper portfolios or websites previews also work. For programmers, a URL site with some viewable sample code can be helpful. Also indicate what programming languages you know best (you should be able to demonstrate a proficiency with C++) and systems you have experience on.

9 Sure, it helps to have work experience in the game industry, but don't get discouraged about applying for a job—it's not a must for all positions. (But if you don't have experience, at least have a personality.) Ask about internships. By the same token, industry veterans shouldn't disqualify themselves because they feel the accent is totally on youth. Many companies, especially those with small staffs, simply don't have the time or resources to train people.

10 Don't bug HR people with "repeated phone calls." Often heard: "If I returned every phone call from every applicant and every recruiter, I would never have time to do anything else. Sorry!" Get the message before you blow the gig by being a pest, not after. *GJ*

Continued from page 62

The Importance of Looking at the Big Picture

they must meet our high expectations. Finding these high level candidates is tough. And retaining them is even more difficult. [That's why] as an employee, the ability to move up in the company and increase career expectations is amazing."

WINNING REQUIRES TEAMWORK

"Stainless Steel Studios is incredibly dedicated to teamwork," says Dara-Lynn Pelechatz, director of recruiting and operations. "Candidates need to be good at working in teams and be proficient at peer-to-peer interaction and supporting one another. That commitment comes out in our employees' willingness to work long hours and put the needs of the team above their own interest."

It isn't always about just filling a position, says Shiny's Herrington. "They've got to be technically good just to get a foot in the door for an interview, but their personality needs to mesh well with the others. Let's face it, life's too short to spend 8 to 18 hours a day at work sitting next to somebody you can't stand. Finding qualified people with a proven track record who can get along well with others is probably the toughest thing to find."

"I think the successful ones at EA are those who 'click' in a team environment," says Rusty Rueff, senior VP of human resources at Electronic Arts. "Creating the next interactive experience is a total team effort, and we need smart people who are good team players. Part of this is having good communication skills and interpersonal skills, in addition to great technical or artistic talent.

"I suppose one of our biggest concerns is finding these kinds of people in a tight candidate-driven market. If you are out

Most Active Industry Job Categories

Software Engineer
Technical Engineer
Producer
Developer
Art Director
Artist/Animator (graphic/3D/ modeler/texture)
Game Designer
Graphics Programmer
Game Programmer
Creative Director
Project Manager
Layout Designer
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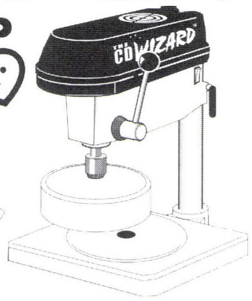

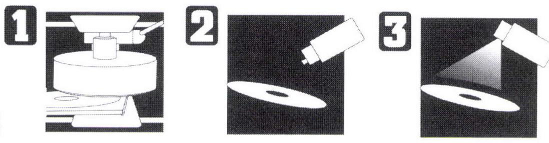

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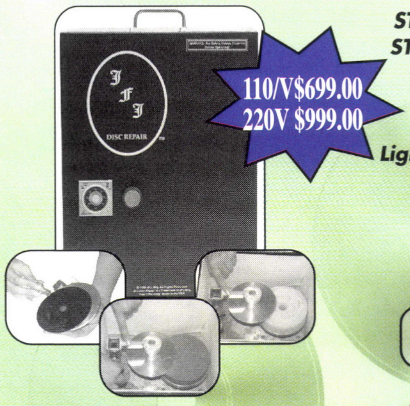

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Market Tracking Reports

THE NPD GROUP, INC.

Top 25 Best Selling Videogame Titles

Ranked on Units Sold April 4-10, 1999

LAST MONTH	RANK	TITLE	PLATFORM	PUBLISHER	AVERAGE RETAIL PRICE
	1	Need for Speed: High Stakes	PlayStation	Electronic Arts	$41
	2	Pokemon Red	Game Boy	Nintendo of America	$29
	3	Pokemon Blue	Game Boy	Nintendo of America	$29
	4	Triple Play 2000	PlayStation	Electronic Arts	$41
	5	Syphon Filter	PlayStation	989 Studios	$41
	6	Mario Party	Nintendo 64	Nintendo of America	$50
	7	MLB 2000	PlayStation	989 Studios	$41
	8	Army Men 3D	PlayStation	The 3DO Company	$41
	9	Beetle Adventure	Nintendo 64	Electronic Arts	$50
	10	Legend of Legaia	PlayStation	Sony Computer Ent.	$41
	11	GoldenEye 007	Nintendo 64	Nintendo of America	$40
	12	Silent Hill	PlayStation	Konami of America	$46
	13	Frogger	PlayStation	Hasbro Interactive	$20
	14	Rugrats	PlayStation	THQ	$41
	15	Tomb Raider 2	PlayStation	Eidos Interactive	$20
	16	Namco Museum Vol. 1	PlayStation	Namco	$21
	17	Legend of Zelda: OoT	Nintendo 64	Nintendo of America	$60
	18	Namco Museum Vol. 3	PlayStation	Namco	$20
	19	Gran Turismo Racing	PlayStation	Sony Computer Ent.	$40
	20	Crash Bandicoot 2	PlayStation	Sony Computer Ent.	$20
	21	Zelda: Links Awakening	Game Boy Color	Nintendo of America	$29
	22	Spyro the Dragon	PlayStation	Sony Computer Ent.	$40
	23	All Star Baseball 2000	Nintendo 64	Acclaim Entertainment	$62
	24	Rayman	PlayStation	Ubi Soft	$15
	25	Vigilante 8	Nintendo 64	Activision	$59

***Not in Top 25 Last Month*

Source: NPD TRSTS Video Games Service • 516.625.2345

Top 10 Portable Software Titles

Ranked on Units Sold April 4-10, 1999

LAST MONTH	RANK	PLATFORM	TITLE	PUBLISHER	AVERAGE RETAIL PRICE
	1	Game Boy	Pokemon Red	Nintendo of America	$29
	2	Game Boy	Pokemon Blue	Nintendo of America	$29
	3	Game Boy Color	Zelda: Links Awakening	Nintendo of America	$29
	4	Game Boy Color	Wario Land 2	Nintendo of America	$30
	5	Game Boy Color	A Bugs Life	THQ	$30
	6	Game Boy Color	Game & Watch Gallery 2	Nintendo of America	$30
	7	Game Boy Color	Frogger	Majesco Sales	$28
	8	Game Boy Color	Tetris Deluxe	Nintendo of America	$30
	9	Game Boy Color	Rampage World Tour	Midway Home Ent.	$30
	10	Game Boy	Donkey Kong Land 2	Nintendo of America	$20

Source: NPD TRSTS Video Games Service • 516.625.2345

Top 10 Best Selling PlayStation Titles

Ranked on Units Sold April 4-10, 1999

THIS MONTH	TITLE	PUBLISHER	AVERAGE RETAIL PRICE
1	Need for Speed: High Stakes	Electronic Arts	$41
2	Triple Play 2000	Electronic Arts	$41
3	Syphon Filter	989 Studios	$41
4	MLB 2000	989 Studios	$41
5	Army Men 3D	The 3DO Company	$41
6	Legend of Legaia	Sony Computer Ent.	$41
7	Silent Hill	Konami of America	$46
8	Frogger	Hasbro Interactive	$20
9	Rugrats	THQ	$41
10	Tomb Raider 2	Eidos Interactive	$20

Source: NPD TRSTS Video Games Service • 516.625.2345

Top 10 Best Selling Nintendo 64 Titles

Ranked on Units Sold April 4-10, 1999

THIS MONTH	TITLE	PUBLISHER	AVERAGE RETAIL PRICE
1	Mario Party	Nintendo of America	$50
2	Beetle Adventure	Electronic Arts	$50
3	GoldenEye 007	Nintendo of America	$40
4	Legend of Zelda: OoT	Nintendo of America	$60
5	All Star Baseball 2000	Acclaim Entertainment	$62
6	Vigilante 8	Activision	$59
7	Triple Play 2000	Electronic Arts	$50
8	Super Mario 64	Nintendo of America	$40
9	WCW/nWo Revenge	THQ	$50
10	Mario Kart 64	Nintendo of America	$40

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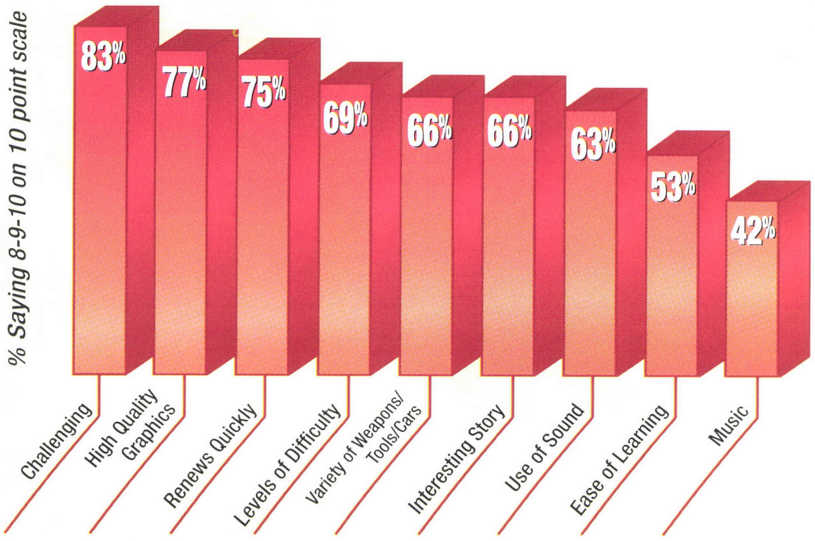
Elements of Favorite Games

Q: Please rate your favorite PC game for the following elements. Rate each as to how much it contributes to making this game your favorite.



The top ranke attribute to a respondent's favorite game was the fact that it was challenging (83% mention). Graphics were second in importance with a 77% mention.

The above information was taken from the Gaming 2001 Report, a multi-client study of consumers that focuses on the future of the gaming market developed and performed by Fairfield Research. The Gaming 2001 Report is sponsored by *GameWEEK* Magazine and CIBC Oppenheimer, and was developed with input from the key companies who develop or manufacture game hardware and software. For more information regarding the Gaming 2001 Report, contact Fairfield Research, Inc., 5815 South 58th, Lincoln, NE 68516, 402.441.3370, www.cybersurvey.com.

Top 10 Best Selling Videogame Titles

Based on Items introduced in 1999 Only
Ranked on Units Sold

April 4-10, 1999

RANK	TITLE	PLATFORM	PUBLISHER	RELEASE DATE	AVG. RETAIL PRICE
1	Need for Speed: H.S.	PlayStation	Electronic Arts	Mar '99	$41
2	Triple Play 2000	PlayStation	Electronic Arts	Mar '99	$41
3	Syphon Filter	PlayStation	989 Sudios	Feb '99	$41
4	Mario Party	Nintendo 64	Nintendo of America	Feb '99	$50
5	MLB 2000	PlayStation	989 Sudios	Mar '99	$41
6	Army Men 3D	PlayStation	The 3DO Company	Mar '99	$41
7	Beetle Adventure	Nintendo 64	Electronic Arts	Mar '99	$50
8	Legend of Legaia	PlayStation	Sony Computer Ent.	Mar '99	$41
9	Silent Hill	PlayStation	Konami of America	Feb '99	$46
10	All Star Baseball 2000	Nintendo 64	Acclaim Entertainment	Apr '99	$62

Source: NPD TRSTS Video Games Service • 516.625.2345

Top 10 Best Selling Videogame Accessories

Ranked on Dollars Sold

April 4-10, 1999

RANK	TITLE	PLATFORM	PUBLISHER	AVG. RETAIL PRICE
1	Game Shark	PlayStation	Interact Accesories	$49
2	Game Shark	Nintendo 64	Interact Accesories	$49
3	Dual Shock Controller	PlayStation	Sony Computer Ent.	$30
4	Mem. Expansion Pack	Nintendo 64	Nintendo of America	$30
5	Memory Card	PlayStation	Sony Computer Ent.	$15
6	RFU Adapter	PlayStation	Interact Accesories	$13
7	RF Adapter 2	PlayStation	Sony Computer Ent.	$15
8	Blue Dual Sh. Control	PlayStation	Sony Computer Ent.	$30
9	RFU Adapter	Nintendo 64	Interact Accesories	$13
10	Memory Card Value Pack	PlayStation	Interact Accesories	$13

Source: NPD TRSTS Video Games Service • 516.625.2345

Top 10 Best Selling Videogame Accessories

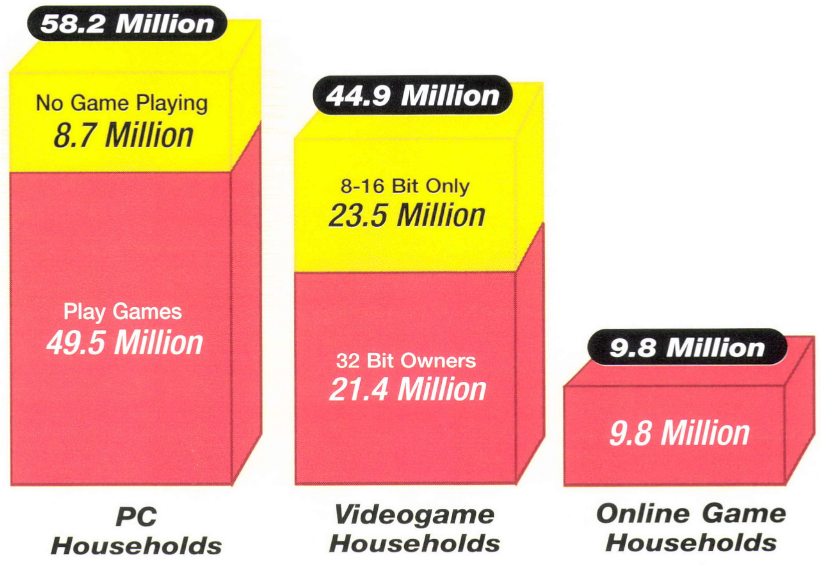
Based on Items introduced in 1999 Only
Ranked on Units Sold

April 4-10, 1999

RANK	TITLE	PLATFORM	PUBLISHER	AVG. RETAIL PRICE
1	RFU Adapter	PlayStation	Interact Accessories	$13
2	Memory Card	PlayStation	Sony Computer Ent.	$15
3	Memory Card Value Pack	PlayStation	Interact Accessories	$13
4	RF Adapter 2	PlayStation	Sony Computer Ent.	$15
5	RFU Adapter	Nintendo 64	Interact Accessories	$13
6	Dual Shock Controller	PlayStation	Sony Computer Ent.	$30
7	Controller	PlayStation	Sony Computer Ent.	$15
8	Memory Card 15X	PlayStation	Mad Catz	$12
9	Mem. Expansion Pack	Nintendo 64	Nintendo of America	$30
10	Controller Memory PAK	Nintendo 64	Nintendo of America	$12

Source: NPD TRSTS Video Games Service • 516.625.2345

Size of Gaming Market Number of Households



- As of September 1998, there were 58.2 million US households with a PC. Of these, 45.5 million play games on the PC and 11.9 million do not use the PC for game playing.
- As of September, 44.9 million US households owned a video game console system. Of these 21.4 million owned 32/64 bit systems and 23.5 million owned only an 8 or 16 bit console.
- There are currently 9.8 million households that report playing games online.

The above information was taken from the Gaming 2001 Report, a multi-client study of consumers that focuses on the future of the gaming market developed and performed by Fairfield Research. The Gaming 2001 Report is sponsored by *GameWEEK* Magazine and CIBC Oppenheimer, and was developed with input from the key companies who develop or manufacture game hardware and software. For more information regarding the Gaming 2001 Report, contact Fairfield Research, Inc., 5815 South 58th, Lincoln, NE 68516, 402.441.3370, www.cybersurvey.com.

Top 20 Videogame Manufacturers

Based on Dollars Sold

April 4-10, 1999

RANK	PUBLISHER
1	Nintendo of America
2	Sony
3	Electronic Arts
4	Interact Accessories
5	Midway Home Entertainment
6	Acclaim
7	THQ
8	Konami of America
9	Activision
10	The 3DO Company
11	Namco
12	Eidos
13	Capcom
14	Mad Catz
15	Hasbro
16	Majesco Sales
17	LucasArts Entertainment
18	Crave Entertainment
19	Accolade
20	GT Interactive

**Includes all Categories (Hardware, Software, Accessories)*
Source: NPD TRSTS Video Games Service • 516.625.2345

Stock Index

Visit www.gamedaily.com for the latest information and stock index quotes.

Publishers/Manufacturers

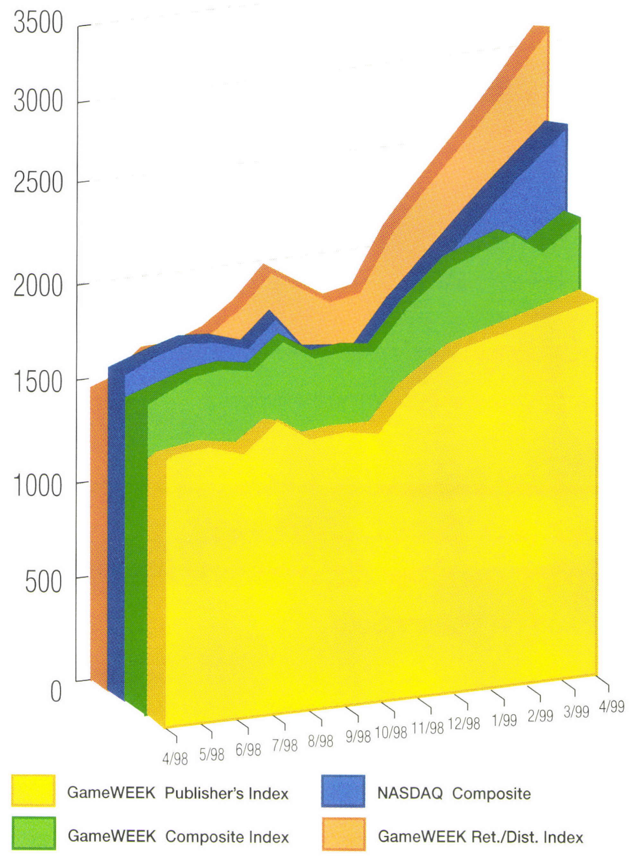
EXCH	TICKER	COMPANY	52-WEEK HIGH	52-WEEK LOW	P/E RATIO	4/16/99 CLOSE	4/23/99 CLOSE	% CHANGE IN PERIOD	% CHANGE IN YEAR
NASD	TDDDF	3D Labs Inc Ltd	17.50	2.25	-	3.00	3.00	0.00%	-14.29%
NASD	TDFX	3Dfx	31.50	8.00	14.1	19.88	18.81	-5.35%	49.01%
NASD	THDO	3DO	7.50	1.87	-	5.91	5.81	-1.59%	20.78%
NASD	AKLM	Acclaim	13.00	4.50	10.4	7.25	6.47	-10.78%	-47.19%
NASD	ATVI	Activision	14.87	8.75	23.3	11.75	11.44	-2.66%	2.81%
NASD	ADRN	Adrenalin Interactive Inc New	11.25	0.50	-	5.88	6.88	17.02%	233.33%
NYSE	AMD	Advanced Micro Devices Inc	33.00	9.31	-	16.38	17.13	4.58%	-40.95%
NASD	AAPL	Apple Computer	47.31	25.62	12.3	35.44	39.19	10.58%	-4.27%
NYSE	BDE	Brilliant Digital Enmt Inc	5.25	1.06	-	3.38	3.38	0.00%	92.86%
NYSE	CRUS	Cirrus Logic	13.43	5.56	-	7.53	7.34	-2.49%	-25.16%
NYSE	CPQ	Compaq Comp.	51.25	22.56	-	23.63	23.13	-2.12%	-44.94%
NASD	CREAF	Creative Labs	22.37	7.87	10.1	15.25	14.00	-8.20%	-6.67%
NASD	DELL	Dell	55.00	18.12	82.7	38.25	43.00	12.42%	17.51%
NASD	DIMD	Diamond Multimedia	13.75	2.87	-	7.25	5.00	-31.03%	-21.57%
NYSE	DIS	Disney	42.75	22.50	42.1	33.38	34.50	3.37%	15.00%
NASD	EIDSY	Eidos Interactive†††	36.87	9.00	18.3	34.63	35.75	3.25%	122.57%
NASD	ERTS	Electronic Arts	57.12	33.25	49.9	49.88	52.88	6.02%	-5.79%
NASD	XPRT	Expert Software	5.50	0.68	-	1.97	2.31	17.46%	13.85%
NASD	GTIS	GT Interactive	11.50	2.75	9.6	2.97	2.78	-6.32%	-44.38%
AMEX	HAS	Hasbro	34.25	18.68	31.6	32.63	32.88	0.77%	-9.00%
NYSE	HWP	Hewlett Packard	83.87	47.06	27.3	70.38	77.13	9.59%	12.90%
NYSE	IBM	IBM	199.75	106.00	28.3	170.38	199.75	17.24%	8.34%
NASD	INTC	Intel	71.87	32.87	32.0	57.25	61.75	7.86%	4.16%
NASD	IMGK	Interactive Magic	14.75	2.37	-	3.38	2.97	-12.04%	-30.66%
NASD	INGR	Intergraph	10.56	4.68	-	6.69	6.81	1.87%	18.48%
NASD	IPLY	Interplay	8.25	1.00	-	2.03	2.13	4.62%	19.30%
NYSE	TLC	Learning Company Inc	32.81	15.37	-	31.69	30.00	-5.33%	14.83%
NASD	LOGIY	Logitech	15.75	8.12	70.8	14.00	12.75	-8.93%	12.09%
NASD	MVSN	Macrovision	46.75	17.50	52.4	37.50	38.75	3.33%	-8.28%
NYSE	MAT	Mattel Inc	44.50	21.25	26.2	29.00	25.94	-10.56%	10.37%
NASD	MTWKF	Metrowerks Corporation	8.00	2.25	-	3.56	3.63	1.75%	-10.08%
NASD	MSFT	Microsoft	95.62	40.93	68.3	86.63	86.00	-0.72%	24.02%
NYSE	MWY	Midway	25.00	7.62	8.9	9.13	8.75	-4.11%	-20.45%
NASD	PRAN	Piranha Interactive Publishing	4.06	0.75	4.9	1.38	1.31	-4.55%	-30.00%
NASD	RCOT	Recoton	39.43	12.00	46.4	16.06	16.69	3.89%	-6.97%
NASD	EGAM	eGames Inc.	6.15	0.93	16.3	3.19	2.94	-7.84%	77.36%
NYSE	SIII	S3 Inc	9.43	1.53	-	7.81	7.38	-5.60%	0.43%
NYSE	SNE	Sony Corp.	104.31	60.25	23.9	99.69	96.06	-3.64%	33.42%
NASD	SSII	Sound Source Interactive Inc	2.50	0.56	-	1.00	0.81	-18.75%	4.00%
NASD	STBI	Stb Systems	20.12	3.87	-	12.75	11.75	-7.84%	75.70%
NASD	TTWO	Take Two	13.62	4.75	22.7	9.00	9.75	8.33%	18.18%
NASD	THQI	T-HQ	32.12	9.50	17.7	24.06	24.44	1.56%	-12.72%
NASD	TMSR	ThrustMaster	22.62	2.50	-	21.25	21.00	-1.18%	31.25%
AMEX	VIA	Viacom	48.75	24.62	-	40.38	46.19	14.40%	25.57%
NASD	VOXW	Voxware Inc	3.81	0.40	-	0.75	0.81	8.33%	-16.13%

Retailers and Distributors

EXCH	TICKER	COMPANY	52-WEEK HIGH	52-WEEK LOW	P/E RATIO	4/16/99 CLOSE	4/23/99 CLOSE	% CHANGE IN PERIOD	% CHANGE IN YEAR
NASD	AMZN	Amazon.Com Inc	210.13	12.87	-	190.00	210.13	10.59%	96.23%
NASD	AMES	Ames Stores	38.75	10.50	25.6	34.56	35.88	3.80%	32.87%
NYSE	BKS	Barnes & Noble	48.00	22.18	27.4	36.00	35.38	-1.74%	-16.76%
NYSE	BBY	Best Buy	57.37	14.87	47.7	52.19	51.00	-2.28%	66.19%
NASD	BYND	Beyond.Com Corp	41.31	6.18	-	31.00	30.75	-0.81%	48.19%
NASD	CDNW	Cdnow Inc	39.25	7.00	-	15.94	14.13	-11.37%	-21.53%
NYSE	CC	Circuit City	78.37	28.81	45.9	65.00	67.94	4.52%	36.05%
NYSE	CPU	Comp USA	21.75	5.56	-	5.94	6.19	4.21%	-52.63%
NASD	COOL	Cyberian Outpost Inc	45.50	5.93	-	16.13	17.13	6.20%	-37.73%
NASD	CYSP	Cybershop Intl Inc	30.00	2.75	-	12.75	12.44	-2.45%	9.34%
NASD	DRIV	Digital River Inc	61.37	5.00		40.63	38.75	-4.62%	9.15%
NASD	EBAY	eBay Inc	200.13	8.43	-	176.00	200.13	13.71%	65.91%
NASD	EGGS	EggHead	40.25	4.31	-	15.19	15.19	0.00%	-27.03%
NASD	ELBO	Electronics Boutique	25.75	6.62	13.6	16.13	15.06	-6.59%	-26.07%
NYSE	FMY	Fred Meyer Inc.	68.87	36.62	161.0	54.75	54.75	0.00%	-9.13%
NASD	FNCO	Funco Inc	23.81	9.62	11.6	18.25	17.00	-6.85%	-2.86%
NASD	GGUY	Good Guys	15.75	2.68	-	3.75	3.06	-18.33%	-52.43%
NASD	IMAL	IMall Inc	32.75	5.50	-	16.00	16.50	3.13%	-9.59%
NYSE	KM	K Mart Corp	20.87	10.75	15.4	16.00	15.56	-2.73%	1.63%
NYSE	MAY	May Dept Stores	47.25	33.18	17.7	38.75	40.88	5.48%	1.55%
NASD	NAVR	Navarre	27.00	2.18	-	15.88	14.38	-9.45%	42.86%
NYSE	S	Sears	65.00	39.06	15.6	42.44	42.75	0.74%	0.59%
NYSE	SME	Service Merchandise	2.25	0.09	-	0.28	0.28	0.00%	0.00%
NASD	SPLS	Staples	35.93	14.87	78.0	30.50	32.00	4.92%	-26.75%
NYSE	TAN	Tandy	74.75	37.00	135.9	65.38	73.38	12.24%	78.15%
NASD	TOPS	Tops Appliance	6.43	0.93	-	1.38	1.28	-6.82%	-54.44%
NYSE	TOY	Toys R Us	29.50	13.62	-	19.94	21.94	10.03%	29.52%
NYSE	WMT	Walmart	53.37	24.06	51.5	47.50	50.94	7.24%	25.10%

Source: Nordby International, Inc. (nordby.com), Boulder, CO. This information is based on sources believed to be reliable, and while extensive efforts are made to assure its accuracy, no guarantees can be made. Nordby International assumes no liability for any inaccuracies. For information on Nordby's customized financial research services, call 303.938.1877.

Index Comparisons



Summary of Results

Advances: 34 Declines: 34 Unchanged: 5

GAINERS	% CHANGE
Expert Software	17.46%
IBM	17.24%
Adrenalin Interactive Inc New	17.02%
Viacom	14.40%
eBay Inc	13.71%

LOSERS	% CHANGE
Diamond Multimedia	-31.03%
Sound Source Interactive Inc	-18.75%
Good Guys	-18.33%
Interactive Magic	-12.04%
Cdnow Inc	-11.37%

INDEX COMPARISONS	4/16/99	4/23/99	NET CHANGE	% CHANGE
GameDaily Composite Index	1940.88	2047.90	107.02	5.51
GameDaily Publishers Index	1843.21	1937.00	93.79	5.09
GameDaily Retailers/Distributors	2898.66	3096.84	198.18	6.84
NASDAQ Composite	2484.04	2590.69	106.65	4.29
Dow Jones Industrial Average	10493.89	10689.67	195.78	1.87
S&P 500 Stock Index	1318.77	1356.80	38.03	2.88
Russel 2000	421.58	431.73	10.15	2.41

Reader Information

VIDTRAC'S Top 25 Renting Games

For the week ending April 18, 1999

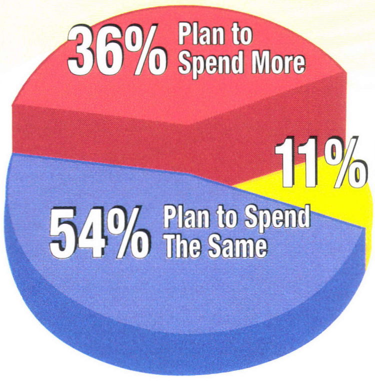
Rank	Platform	Title	Game Publisher	Street Date	Weekly Turns (000)	Weekly Revenue (000)
1	N64	Mario Party	Nintendo of America	Feb '99	85.80	$278.17
2	PSX	Syphon Filter	989 Studios	Jan '99	64.77	$203.68
3	N64	Vigilante 8	Activision	Mar '99	61.82	$197.37
4	PSX	Need For Speed IV: High Stakes	Electronic Arts	Mar '99	57.27	$174.34
5	PSX	Silent Hill	Konami	Feb '99	52.84	$160.50
6	N64	South Park	Acclaim Entertainment	Dec '98	48.86	$158.07
7	PSX	Army Men 3D	3DO Games	Mar '99	48.98	$155.35
8	N64	Beetle Adventure Racing	Electronic Arts	Mar '99	48.98	$152.06
9	N64	WCW/NWO Revenge	THQ Inc.	Aug '98	44.77	$148.71
10	PSX	Triple Play 2000	EA Sports	Mar '99	44.89	$143.42
11	PSX	MLB 2000	989 Studios	Mar '99	45.80	$138.57
12	N64	Legend Of Zelda: Ocarina Of Time	Nintendo of America	Nov '98	38.07	$129.45
13	N64	Triple Play 2000	EA Sports	Mar '99	40.23	$122.03
14	PSX	WCW/NWO Thunder	THQ Inc.	Jan '99	38.41	$117.64
15	N64	All Star Baseball 2000	Acclaim Entertainment	Apr '99	39.32	$117.47
16	N64	GoldenEye 007	Nintendo of America	Aug '97	36.14	$116.89
17	N64	Rampage 2: Universal Tour	Midway	Mar '99	36.70	$115.80
18	N64	Star Wars: Rogue Squadron	Nintendo of America	Dec '98	29.55	$94.17
19	N64	Turok 2: Seeds Of Evil	Acclaim Entertainment	Nov '98	26.82	$89.23
20	N64	Battle Tanx	3DO Games	Dec '98	28.07	$88.76
21	N64	WWF: Warzone	Acclaim Entertainment	Jul '98	25.34	$83.32
22	PSX	Rampage 2: Universal Tour	Midway	Mar '99	28.07	$82.96
23	PSX	Metal Gear Solid	Konami	Oct '98	28.75	$82.12
24	N64	Castlevania	Konami	Jan '99	23.30	$79.56
25	PSX	Rugrats	THQ Inc.	Nov '98	26.59	$76.52

Exclusive Household Spending Survey

ACNielsen

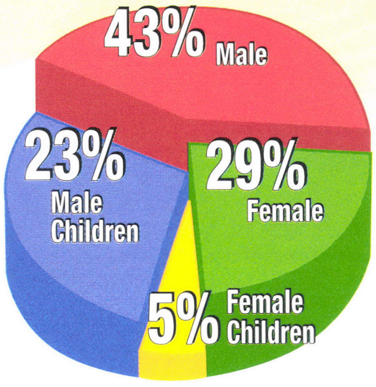
Projected Spending

Within the next year



Videogame Decision Makers

Within the household



Preliminary results from an exclusive ACNielsen/GameWEEK survey of ACNielsen's Homescan™ panel provides some good news for the electronic entertainment industry. A full 36% of U.S. Households plan to buy at least one PC or videogame in the next 12 months. That number equates to about 36 million households. Even better, almost 35% of those households plan to increase their spending in the coming year, compared to the prior year. Of that number, almost 1/3 (11%) did not make a purchase last year but plan to do so in the next 12 months. Of the remaining households, 54% plan to spend the same and just under 11% plan to spend less.

In the same survey, consumers were asked who had the most influence on which PC or videogame is purchased. As expected, male adults are the most frequent decision makers at 43%. However, number 2 is not male children, as might be expected. Female adults took the second spot and have the most influence on which title to buy in 29% of households. Male children were not too far behind at 23%. Female children were far behind at only 5%.

The preliminary results are based on responses from over 18,000 ACNielsen Homescan panelists. The results were then projected to be representative of the total U.S. More detailed results of the survey will be released during E3.

Calendar of Events

June

1-4 NewMedia '99
Toronto, Canada
www.newmedia.ca

10-11 '99 Trends Conf.
San Francisco, CA
www.pcdata.com

July

8-10 VSDA Show
Los Angeles, CA
www.vsda.org

August

30-Sept. 2
IEMA Exec.Summit, San Diego, CA
www.theiema.com

September

5-7 ECTS '99
London, England
www.ects.com

24-26 Focus on Video
Toronto, Canada
focusonvideo.com

GameWEEK Reader Services

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Clinton Slams Game Industry in Wake of School Shooting

Intense videogames again linked to crimes

By Andy Eddy

Media coverage of any tragedy seems to come in layers: Initial bulletins report the facts of the crime in progress or shortly after its conclusion, and subsequent articles delve deeper into the lives of the killer(s), the victim(s), the effects on the city in which the calamity took place and most any other tidbit of information that may be considered pertinent. Page after page of newspaper coverage and minute after minute of television news programs are filled with increasing granularity in furnishing information to their readers and viewers.

This was the case in the aftermath of last month's shootings at a Littleton, Colorado, high school, where 13 people were killed before the two gunmen took their own lives. The first reports coming out of the area tried to determine the basics of what was happening—and were accompanied by stunning helicopter shots of the chaos, evacuations, rescues and carnage. Not long thereafter, the media mission was to ascertain such facts as the actual number of those who lost their lives and to announce the discovery of bombs on-site, which led to mention of the lengthy search for other explosive devices that the antagonists left behind. Further expansion of the coverage on the gunmen continued with varied topics about how they got their weapons, the moods and intentions of the "Trench Coat Mafia" clique they belonged to, and the diaries and web sites that spoke of their tenets and external interests.

It didn't take long for this magnification into those responsible for this mournful drama to result in major hits to the interactive-entertainment industry, particularly following reports that one of the assailants was an enthusiast of id Software's *Doom*. Immediately, a primary focus became the effect of electronic games on our youth—as reflected in the above headlines from various news sources—with myriad claims that games, movies, music and other entertainments carry a certain measure of responsibility for what happened in Littleton and other previous school-shooting incidents. Amplifying the scrutiny was the fact that one week prior to the Littleton tragedy, lawyers for the families of three kids murdered by a teenager in a December, 1997 shooting in Kentucky filed suit against selected game companies, movie companies and Internet pornography sites for claims that they contributed to drive the gunman to his rampage.

Colorado Teen Gunmen Liked Computers, War Games"

—Reuters

"Shooting Spurs Entertainment Debate"

—Associated Press

"Clinton Sees Violent Influence in 3 Video Games"

—Los Angeles Times

"When Death Imitates Art"

—Washington Post

"Buchanan Puts Blame on Entertainment Industry"

—San Jose Mercury News/Associated Press

"Digital Commerce: Linking Entertainment to Violence"

—New York Times

"Kids, Online and Off, Feast on Violence"

—USA Today

A HISTORY OF FINGER POINTING

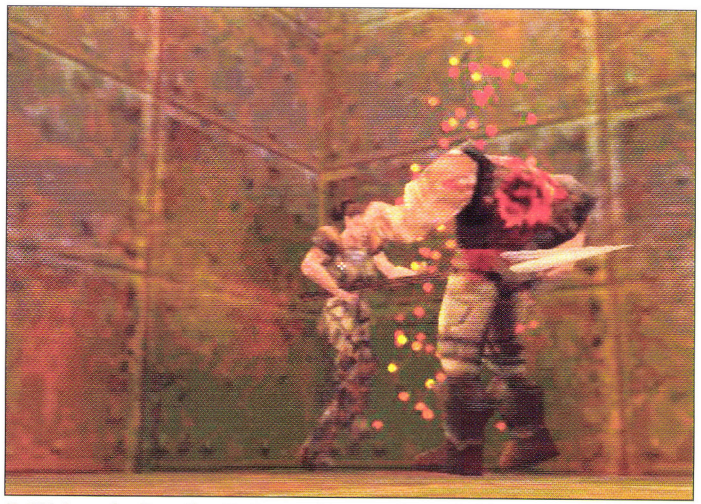
Through the last half century, we've witnessed witch hunts that target various forms of entertainment as being the next scourge of our society. In the '50s, comic books such as *Tales from the Crypt* were slammed for their horrific imagery and gruesome storylines. Music in its various genres—rock 'n' roll, heavy metal, rap and so-called "goth rock," among others—have been announced as having the potential to tear our moral fiber and wreck common sense. Cartoons, such as *Bugs Bunny* and *Roadrunner*, are said to desensitize our kids to violence.

On the surface, it makes sense to take games like *Doom*, *Quake* or *Duke Nukem*—what many would call a violence-inspiring activities—and say that they're destroying our youth's ability to discern right from wrong. Of course, it would be great to find a concrete connection between a heinous event and the activities of the ones who committed it, but pointing such a finger at electronic games or other entertainments is at best a knee-jerk reaction.

However, millions of people get enjoyment out of such games every day and don't become deranged murderers. And that's because 99.99% of those gaming enthusiasts see electronic games—and movies and TV shows—for what they are: entertainment sources that inspire the imagination and delve the participant into a diversionary fantasy world for a period of time. Sadly, the ones who are likely to criticize are the ones who are least likely to participate themselves and therefore don't have a full understanding of what such entertainment forms can offer the consumer.

DOOM II
id
SOFTWARE

Doom ***was at the center of controversy in the latest school shooting.***



Politicians don't realize that a small percentage of videogames are violent.

Additionally, the fact that we're approaching an election year carries some weight. When something like the Littleton tragedy happens, it's commonplace to create a groundswell of emotion and lead everyone to jump on a bandwagon. A politician who addresses a crowd, says that he's offended by supposed violence-inducing entertainments and states that it should stop seems like someone who's looking after our best interests. Hopefully, people will look to the logic of the issue and make educated decisions based on fact, not rhetoric.

To those who look deeply into the reasons for school shootings and other similar crimes, they'll generally find the antagonists are already detached from society in some form. As the facts came out, it appeared that the two gunmen who carried out the Littleton, Colorado killings were ostracized and outcasts. To people like that, it's common to find such derision accompanied by subsequent immersion into anti-social behaviors. In that case, a *Doom* or Marilyn Manson song may become a "sanctuary" of sorts. And if the end result is to lash out in anger, an emulation of those things that "speak to" them can happen.

With that said, while the impulsive response is to flowchart the timeline of such a disaster with "play violent electronic games and listen to raucous music" leading directly to "harm others," another more logical course could be "lose hope" leading to "detach from logic and common sense" to "harm others," with various forms of entertainment activities as things they do along the way—and not necessarily influences or personality shapers.

Sure, it's another theory, but one that's pretty well backed up by the millions who play war games and "shooters," watch gory movies and listen to gloomy music, then proceed to go about their normal lives. It would be encouraging if it's also considered by those who desire to determine how entertainment forms figure in the cause and effect of such incidents as the Littleton shootings.

GW

Acclaim's CEO Testifies Before Congress

Industry self-regulation key for Internet privacy

By Andy Eddy

Acclaim Entertainment Chairman and chief executive officer, Gregory Fischbach, testified before congress recently, urging them to allow industries to self regulate Internet privacy guidelines.

Speaking on behalf of the Interactive Digital Software Association, Fischbach told Congress, "Our industry has made important strides toward protecting privacy. But my experience these last few months developing a privacy policy which works for Acclaim tells me that a 'one size fits all' legislative or regulatory approach is a recipe for confusion. Industry self-regulation, while imperfect, is ultimately the best and swiftest way to protect consumer privacy on the Internet."

The IDSA recently issued voluntary industry privacy guidelines, many of which, Fischbach said, mirrored privacy principles recommended by the Department of Commerce and the Organization for Economic and Cooperation and Development. Those guidelines include stronger protection for children ages 13 to 17 and providing consumers with broader access to information companies hold. In addition, Fischbach noted that 16 IDSA members, who accounted for almost 60% of all game sales in 1998, have posted online privacy policies as required by the guidelines. *GW*

Gregory Fischbach

Continued from page 24

Industry Insiders Bullish on Growth

he doesn't expect sales to hold up at those levels for the full year, he is projecting an overall increase of 10 to 15% in units and dollars. For 1998, NPD estimated 77 million leisure software units sold, up 18% from the prior year, worth more than $1.756 billion at retail, up 2.8% from 1997.

One positive factor for continuing growth is the fact that more than 51% of U.S. households now have at least one computer, according to the Media Metrix division of NPD. Pricing has dropped significantly with more value-added budget titles from many sources, and there continues to be more "play-perceived value in videogames on the TV than leisure software on the computer screen," Roth observes.

Doug Lowenstein, president of the Interactive Digital Software Assn. (IDSA), shares Roth's forecasts. "There's a very positive feeling overall for the leisure software market from our member company CEOs," he says. "The consensus is for a solid but less impressive gain of 10 to 15% on a dollar value basis for all of 1999. "There's a very strong sense that the new 'mass market' will propel computer games into the next century," he adds. "We're already moving rapidly to a two-tier market, with high-end technology pushing the traditional 'hardcore' videogame market. The computer game market that relies on lower prices and higher volume is targeted more to the casual gamer."

Top leisure software titles in the first quarter noted by NPD's Roth include EA/Maxis' *SimCity 3000*, which sold more than 130,000 units in January and February; EA's *Alpha Centauri;* and Interplay's *Baldur's Gate*. Holdover hits from late 1998 included Sierra's *Half-Life*, Blizzard's *StarCraft Brood War*, Activision/Head Games' *Cabella's Big Game Hunter II* and WizardWorks' *Deer Hunter II*. "We're bullish on the PC market," emphasizes Hasbro Interactive's (HI) president Tom Dusenberry. "It's alive, stable, and under-$1,000 PC plays right into our strategy of proven brands with great gameplay. We look at 1999 as a year for growth, going broader and deeper into the mass market with more categories and platforms. With over half of U.S. homes having computers, technology enhancements combined with consumer acceptance of the PC as 'entertainment' also plays in well for our family-oriented strategy.

We dominate the board game area and are now going after gambling, puzzles and card games." HI will introduce 33 new leisure games at E^3, including nine new Em@il Games titles, the new format launched in February, and four new Windows CE titles for the hand-held market, joining the quartet debuted in March as the first third-party provider to Microsoft's platform. "Let's not underestimate the impact of the new Em@il category," he says. "Several smaller companies are already out with games, and we anticipate others at E^3. Children's entertainment is also a growing category for us and many others."

For Activision, Eric Johnson, senior vice president of marketing, "the PC market continues nice and steady with the biggest opportunities on the mass market side. The expanding penetration of good quality PCs with the 'horsepower' to run demanding games has made the computer a standard home appliance. A large, installed base of Pentium-drive PCs and new Macs with CD-ROM and new DVD-ROM drives are further grounds for optimism." To reach the fast-growing mass market, Activision bought Head Games and has agreement for Expect Software, major developers of appealing low-cost titles selling for under $20. "For hunting, fishing, extreme sports and lifestyle titles, we're very bullish," he adds. "Our biggest hit has been *Cabella's Big Game Hunter II*. For 1999, we'll be expanding our alternative distribution of spinner racks for low-priced lifestyle titles, card games and landscape design, as examples."

With a long history of hardcore game hits, Acclaim sees *Quake III: Arena* as "likely to be the biggest PC hit of the year," Johnson says. "Our 10-year license with Paramount for Star Trek has paid off handsomely, and we'll have at least three new games from the franchise this year." Acclaim also will be bowing new titles for both PSX and N64, with its *War Zone WWF* in the top 10 for both platforms most of last year.

In the overall leisure software market, HI's Dusenberry sees continual price erosion. "The proliferation of budget-priced lines, including our own at E^3, will lower the average leisure software price as more consumers come into the mass market," he says. "It means that the strong will survive and the weak will die in today's—and tomorrow's—very competitive marketplace." *GW*

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AUDITING
GameWEEK Magazine, BPA membership applied for July 1998. GameWeek.com, BPAI membership applied for December 1998.

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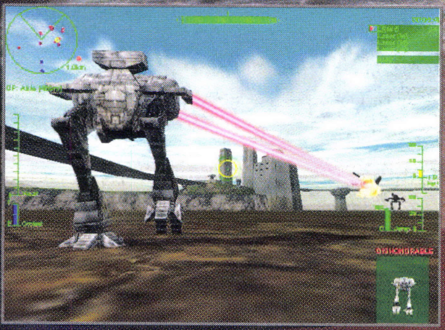

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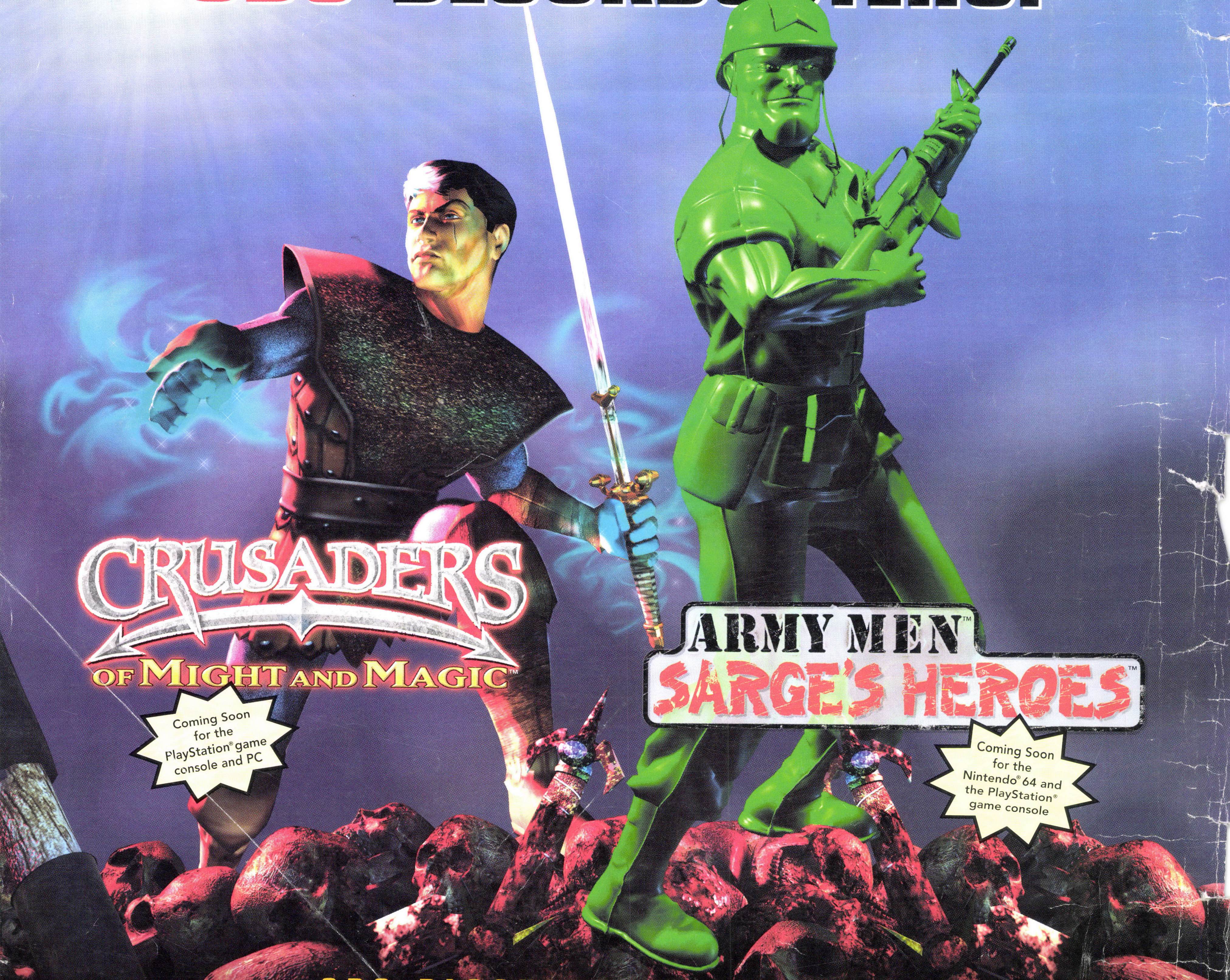
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